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ENGLISH TONGUE.

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IN FIFTY VOLUMES.

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By JOHN WESLEY, M. A.  
Late FELLOW of *Lincoln-College*, OXFORD.

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VOL. XXXVIII.

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BRISTOL:  
Printed by E. FARLEY.

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CHRISTIAN LITERATURE

EXTRACTS FROM THE

THE

CHOICEST PIECES



PIECES

Which have been published by the

ENGLISH TONGUE

In Fifty Volumes

BY JOHN WESLEY, M.A.

late Fellow of Trinity College, Oxford

VOL. XXXVIII

REVISED

Printed by E. TAYLOR

WOLFE

# DEVOTIONAL TRACTS.

TRANSLATED

From the *FRENCH*.

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LET.

DEVOTIONAL

T R A C T S

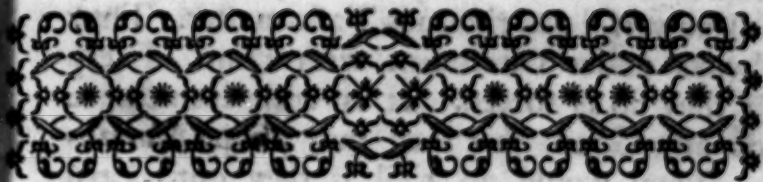
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OF



# LETTERS

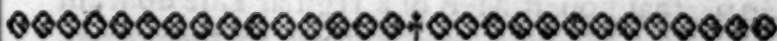
TO THE

DUKE of *BURGUNDY*,

FROM

M. DE FENELON,

ARCHBISHOP of CAMBRAY.



## LETTER I.

*Of the Love of God.*

**I** BELIEVE, my Lord, the true Way of loving Mankind is to love them in GOD and for his Sake. Men know not what it is to love GOD, and therefore they dread Him, and keep at a Distance from Him. This slavish Fear hinders them from understanding the sweet Familiarity of Children in the Bosom of the

tenderest of Fathers. They look upon Him only as an all-powerful and rigorous Task-master. They are always under Constraint with Him. Every Thing they do is forced. It is with Reluctance they do any Good, that they may escape Punishment. They would do Evil if they durst, and could hope for Impunity. The Love of GOD appears to them a burdensome Debt. They endeavour to elude it by Formalities and external Worship; still inclining to substitute these in the Place of sincere and effectual Love. They use Artifices with GOD Himself, to give Him as little as possibly they can. O my GOD! if Men knew what it is to love Thee, they would seek no other Life, no other Joy but thy Love.

THIS Love requires nothing of us, but to do for the Sake of GOD, what Reason itself should incline us to do. We are not desired to add to the Number of the good Works which we have already learned to practise: All that is incumbent upon us, is to do the same Things from a Principle of Love to GOD, that honest Men of a regular Life do from Principles of Honour, and Regard to themselves. Nothing is to be laid aside but what is wrong, which we ought to lay aside, though we had no other Principle but right Reason. As for the rest, let us leave all Matters in that Order which GOD hath established in the World. Let us do the same honourable and virtuous Things as formerly, but let us do them for his Sake who made us, and to whom we owe all.

THIS Love of GOD does not require of all Christians the Austerities of the ancient Hermits, nor their profound Solitude: Neither does it in ordinary Cases demand, shining, heroick Deeds; nor  
renouncing



renouncing lawful Possessions, nor abandoning the Advantages of any Condition of Life. It would only have us just, sober and moderate in the proper Use of all these Things. It would only have us not make them our God, and our Happiness; but to use them according to his Designs, and so as they may help to raise our Affections towards Him.

THIS Love does not multiply our Crosses. It finds all Conditions of Life already sown with all Kinds of them. They arise from the Infirmary of our Bodies, and the Passions of our Souls; from our own Imperfections, and those of other Men, with whom we live. The Love of God causes none of these Pains. On the contrary, it sweetens all our Sufferings. It likewise lessens them by moderating our ardent Passions, and too great Sensibility, the Source of all our real Ills. Were the Love of God so perfect in us, as to draw off our Affections from whatever we fear to lose, or hope to gain, it would finish our Grievances at once, and fill us with a blessed Tranquility.

WHY then so afraid of this Love, which is the Cause of none of our Afflictions, is able to mitigate all of them, and to bring along with it into our Hearts all Kinds of Happiness? Men are much their own Enemies to resist this Love, and to be afraid of it.

THE Precept of Love is so far from being an additional Burden to the rest, that it renders them light and easy. What one does through Fear without Love, is always tedious, hard, painful and burdensome. What one does through Love, becomes by this Means agreeable, how cross soever it be to Sense. The Desire of pleasing that God whom we love, makes us, that if we suffer, we  
chuse

chuse to suffer; and the Suffering which one chuses, is no longer a Suffering.

THIS Love unsettles and changes no Part of that Order which GOD has established. It leaves the Great in their Grandeur, and makes them little under the Hand of Him who made them great. It leaves the Low in the Dust, and makes them satisfied to be nothing but in Him. This Contentment in the lowest Place has no Meanness in it; it makes true Greatness.

THIS Love regulates and animates all the Affections we owe to Creatures. We never love our Neighbour so well as when we love him for the Sake of GOD, and with the Love of GOD. When we love Men without regarding GOD, we love them for our own Sakes: It is still our own Interest we seek in them; either a more gross, or a more refined and disguised Interest. If it is not Money, or Convenience, or Favour; it is the Pleasure of following our Taste, of confiding in them, of being mutually beloved by them. These Things flatter our Self-love more than any Sum of Money can do: So that we really love ourselves when we imagine we love our Friends. But, to love another for the Sake of ourselves is a very imperfect Way of loving them. It is not Friendship; it is Self-love.

It may be asked, what is the right Way then of loving our Friends? It is to love them in their due Order after GOD: It is to love GOD in them; to love what He has given them, and to bear, for his Sake, with the Want of what He has thought fit to deny them. When we love our Friends for our own Sakes; Self-love is impatient, delicate, jealous, full of Wants, and void of Merit, always suspicious both of itself and its Friends; it grows  
weary

weary and disgusted; it soon sees an End of what it entertained the highest Thoughts of; it meets with Disappointments every where; it would always have Perfection, but can never find it; it grows angry; it changes; it can rest in nothing: But the Love of GOD loves its Friends without Views of Self-interest, and so loves them patiently with all their Faults; it seeks no more but what GOD has given them; it looks to nothing in them but GOD and his Gifts; it is pleased with every Thing, because it loves what GOD has made; and bears with what He has not made, but permitted, and would have us to permit, likewise in Compliance with his Designs.

THE Love of GOD never looks for absolute Perfection in the Creatures. It knows this is to be found in GOD alone. It takes great Pleasure in saying to GOD, *who is like unto Thee?* It says to every Thing that has Imperfection in it, thou art not my GOD. As it expects Perfection in no Creature, it is never disappointed. It loves GOD, and his Gifts, in every Creature, according to the Degree of Goodness in every one. It has a less Love to that which is less good, and a greater to that which is better: It has some Love to every Thing, because every Thing has some little Good in it, which is the Gift of GOD; and the very worst Men are capable, while they continue in Life, of becoming good, and of receiving the Gifts they are destitute of at present.

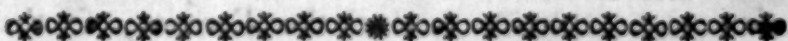
FOR the Sake of GOD, it loves all his Works; all that He has commanded us to love. It raises and heightens its Affection towards such Objects as GOD would have it to prefer to others. In a mortal Father, it looks to its Father in Heaven; in a Kinsman or Friend, it considers the strict Ties  
formed

formed by Providence. The stricter these Ties are in the Order of Providence, the Love of GOD makes them so much more strong and intimate. Can one love GOD, without loving the Objects He has commanded one to love? They are his Workmanship; He has order'd us to love them; shall we not do so?

INDEED, we should far rather die, than love any Thing better than Him. He hath told us in the Gospel, *If any Man love Father or Mother more than Me, he is not worthy of Me.* GOD forbid I should love better than Him, what I love only for his Sake. But upon his Account I love with my Heart whatever represents Him to me, whatever contains his Gifts, whatever He designs I should love. This solid Principle of Love makes me resolve never to be wanting in any Duty, either to my Neighbours or my Friends. Their Imperfections cannot surprize me, for I expect nothing but Imperfection in every Thing which is not my GOD. I see nothing but Him, in whatever has the least Degree of Goodness. It is He whom I love in his Creatures, and nothing can alter this Love. This Love is not indeed always tender and affecting; but it is real, cordial, faithful, constant and active; and I prefer it in my last and sincerest Choice to every other Love. It has also its Tenderneesses, and its Transports. If a Soul was wholly addicted to GOD, it would no longer be subject to that Dryness which is owing only to the Delicacies and Inequalities of Self love. As it would love only for the Sake of GOD, it would love as GOD does, with an admirable Love. *For GOD is Love*, as the Apostle *John* says. Its Bowels would be an inexhaustible Source of living Waters, according to the Promise. Love would, for the Sake of others, *bear all Things, endure all Things, hope all Things;*  
it



it would overcome all Difficulties; it would diffuse itself from the Bottom of the Heart, even upon the external Senses; it would compassionate the Pains of others, and make no Account of its own; it would wait for them; it would accommodate itself to them; it would humble itself to the Low; it would raise itself up to the Great; it would *weep with them that weep, and rejoice with them that rejoice*; it would *become all Things to all Men*, not by a forced Appearance and dry Affectation, but from the Abundance of the Heart, in which the Love of God would be a living Source of all the tenderest, strongest, and most condescending Affections. Nothing is so cold, dry, hard, and reserved, as a Heart that loves itself in all Things. Nothing is so tender, open, lively, sweet, and loving, as a Heart possessed and animated with Divine Love.



## L E T T E R II.

**N**EVER did any Thing give me such Comfort as the Letter I have received. Thanks be to Him who can alone work in the Heart what He pleases, for his own Glory. He must needs love you much, since He maintains his Love in your Soul, while you are surrounded with whatever tends to extinguish it. Love Him then above all Things, and fear nothing but not to love Him. He Himself shall be your Light, your Strength, your Life, your All. O how rich and powerful is a Heart amidst Adversities, when it carries this Treasure within it! You must learn to seek Him in your Heart with the Simplicity of a Child, a  
tender



tender Familiarity and a Confidence that charms so good a Father.

BE not discouraged at your Weaknesses. There is a Way of supporting them without indulging them, and of correcting them without Impatience. GOD will shew you this peaceable and effectual Way, if you seek it with an entire Diffidence in yourself, and walk in the Presence of GOD like *Abraham*.

FOR GOD's Sake let Prayer nourish your Heart, as Food does your Body. Let Prayer at certain stated Times, be a Source of the Presence of GOD through the Day; and let a frequent Recollection of the Presence of GOD be a Renewal of Prayer. This short and affectionate View of GOD revives the whole Man, calms the Passions, carries Light and Counsel along with it on important Occasions, and gradually subdues the Temper; so that one possesses his Soul in Patience, or rather suffers it to be possessed by GOD. *Be renewed in the Spirit of your Mind*. I entreat you, pray a little at least, every Morning, in some Bit of stolen Time. This will nourish you through the whole Day. Pray more with the Heart than the Understanding; more in the Way of simple Affection than Reasoning. Few regular connected Thoughts, but a great deal of Faith and Love.

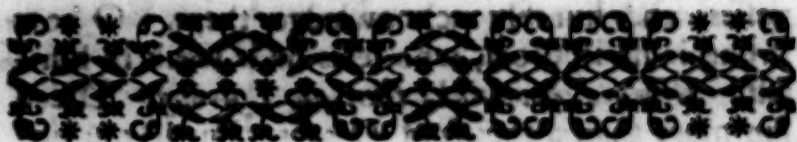
You must read too; but it must be such Things as tend to give you Recollection, and Encouragement, and Familiarity with GOD. Fear not to attend the Sacraments when you have Occasion and Inclination. Let not Things of small Importance deprive you of that Bread from Heaven. Beware of Ostentation: At the same Time never be ashamed of Him who alone is your true Glory.

WHAT

WHAT gives me wonderful Hopes is, that I see by your Letter, you are sensible of your Weaknesses, and humbly acknowledge them. O how strong is he in GOD, who feels he is weak in himself! *When I am weak, then am I strong.* Dread Sin more than a thousand Deaths: But if you unhappily fall into it, make Haste to return to the Father of Mercies, and the GOD of all Consolation, who stretches out his Arms to receive you; and open your wounded Heart to Him who can heal you. Above all Things, be humble and lowly. "I will yet be more vile than thus, and will be "base in mine own Sight." Mind your Duty. Govern your Temper and Inclinations. I speak to you only of GOD and yourself; no Matter for me. I thank GOD my Heart is at Peace: My severest Suffering is my not seeing you; but I carry you continually with me into the Presence of GOD, where I am nearer unto you than the external Senses can make me. I would give a thousand Lives, as a Drop of Water, to see you such as GOD would have you. *Amen! Amen!*

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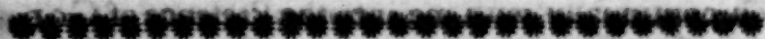




# LETTERS

CONCERNING AND FROM

**B. LAURENCE.**



*The First Letter from B. LAURENCE.*

*To the Reverend ———*

**N**OT finding my Manner of Life in Books, altho' I have no Difficulty about it, yet for greater Security I shall be glad to know your Thoughts concerning it.

IN a Conversation ~~some~~ Days since with a Person of Piety, he told me, the spiritual Life was a Life of Grace, which begins with servile Fear, which is increased by Hope of eternal Life, and which is consummated by pure Love. That each of these States had its different Stages, by which one arrives at last at that blessed Consummation.

I HAVE

I HAVE not followed all these Methods. On the contrary, I found they discourage me. This was the Reason why at my Entrance into Religion, I took a Resolution to give myself up to God, and for the Love of Him to renounce All besides.

FOR the first Years I commonly employ'd myself, during the Time set apart for Devotion, with the Thoughts of Death, of Judgment, Hell, Heaven, and my Sins. Thus I continued some Years, applying my Mind carefully the rest of the Day, and even in the Midst of my Business, to the Presence of God, whom I consider'd always as with me, often as in me.

SUCH was my Beginning : And yet I must tell you, that for the first ten Years I suffered much : The Apprehension that I was not devoted to God, as I wished to be, my past Sins always present to my Mind, and the great unmerited Favours which God did me, were the Matter and Source of my Sufferings. During this Time I fell often, and rose again presently. It seemed to me, that the Creatures, Reason, and God Himself were against me; and Faith alone for me. I was troubled sometimes with Thoughts, that to believe I had received such Favours was Presumption, which pretended to be at once where others arrive with Difficulty; at other Times, that it was a wilful Delusion, and that there was no Salvation for me.

WHEN I thought of nothing but to end my Days in these Troubles (which did not at all diminish the Trust I had in God) I found myself changed all at once; and my Soul, which, 'till that Time, was in Trouble, felt a profound in-



ward Peace, as if she were in her Center and Place of Rest.

EVER since that Time I work before GOD simply, in Faith, with Humility and Love: And I apply myself diligently to do nothing, say nothing, and think nothing which may displease Him.

As for what passes within me at present, I cannot express it. I have no Pain or Difficulty about my State, because I have no Will but that of GOD, which I endeavour to accomplish in all Things, and to which I am so resigned, that I would not take up a Straw from the Ground against his Order, or from any other Motive but purely that of Love to Him.

I HAVE quitted all Forms of Devotion and set Prayers, but those to which my State obliges me. And I make it my Business only to persevere in his holy Presence, wherein I keep myself by a simple Attention, and a general loving Regard to GOD, which I may call an actual Presence of GOD; or to speak better, an habitual, silent, and secret Conversation with GOD, which often causes Joys and Raptures inwardly, and sometimes also outwardly, so great that I am forced to use Means to prevent their Appearance to others.

IN short, I am assured beyond all Doubt, that my Soul hath been with GOD above these thirty Years. I pass over many Things, that I may not be tedious to you: Yet I think it proper to inform you, after what Manner I consider myself before GOD, whom I behold as my King.

I CONSIDER myself as the most wretched of Men, full of Sores and Corruption, and who has  
com-



committed all Sorts of Crimes against his King : Touch'd with a sensible Regret, I confess to Him all my Wickedness, I ask his Forgiveness, I abandon myself in his Hands, that He may do what He pleases with me. This King, full of Mercy and Goodness, very far from chastising me, embraces me with Love, makes me eat at his Table, serves me with his own Hands, gives me the Key of his Treasures ; He converses and delights Himself with me incessantly in a thousand and a thousand Ways, and treats me, in all Respects, as his Favourite. It is thus I consider myself from Time to Time in his holy Presence.

My most usual Method is this simple Attention, and such a general passionate Regard to God ; to whom I find myself oftner attach'd with greater Sweetness and Delight, than that of an Infant at the Mother's Breast : So that, if I dare use the Expression, I should chuse to call this State the Breasts of God, for the inexpressible Sweetness which I taste and experience there.

If sometimes my Thoughts wander from it by Necessity or Infirmary, I am presently recalled by inward Motions, so charming and delicious, that I am ashamed to mention them. I desire your Reverence to reflect rather upon my great Wretchedness, of which you are fully informed, than upon the great Favours which God does me, all unworthy and ungrateful as I am.

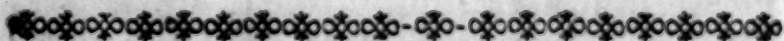
As for my set Hours of Prayer, they are only a Continuation of the same Exercise ; sometimes I consider myself there as a Stone before a Carver, whereof he is to make a Statue : Presenting myself thus before God, I desire Him to make his per-

fect Image in my Soul, and render me entirely like Himself.

AT other Times, when I apply myself to Prayer, I feel all my Spirit, all my Soul, lift itself up without any Care or Effort of mine : And it continues as it were suspended, and firmly fixed in God, as in its Center and Place of Rest.

I CANNOT bear that this should be called Delusion ; because the Soul which thus enjoys God, desires herein nothing but Him. If this be Delusion in me, it belongs to Him to remedy it. Let Him do what He pleases with me : I desire only Him, and to be wholly devoted to Him. You will however oblige me in sending me your Opinion, to which I always pay a great Deference, for I have a singular Esteem for your Reverence, and am in our LORD,

Your's, &c.



*The Second.*

I DO not pray that you may be delivered from your Pains ; but I pray God earnestly that He would give you Strength and Patience to bear them as long as He pleases. Comfort yourself with Him who holds you fastened to the Cross : He will loose you when He thinks fit. Happy those who suffer with Him : Accustom yourself to suffer in that Manner, and seek from Him the Strength to endure as much, and as long as He shall judge to be necessary for you. The Men of  
the

the World do not comprehend these Truths, nor is it to be wondered at, since they suffer like what they are, and not like Christians : They consider Sickness as a Pain to Nature, and not as a Favour from God ; and seeing it only in that Light, they find nothing in it but Grief and Distress. But those who consider Sickness as coming from the Hand of God, as the Effect of his Mercy, and the Means which He employs for our Salvation, commonly find in it great Sweetness and Consolation.

I WISH you could convince yourself, that God is often (in some Sense) nearer to us, and more effectually present with us in Sickness than in Health. Rely upon no other Physician, for, according to my Apprehension, He reserves your Cure to Himself. Put then all your Trust in Him, and you will soon find the Effects of it in your Recovery, which we often retard by putting greater Confidence in Physick than in God.

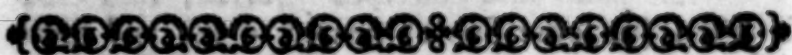
WHATEVER Remedies you make Use of, they will succeed only so far as He permits. When Pains come from God, he only can cure them. He often sends Diseases of the Body, to cure those of the Soul. Comfort yourself with the sovereign Physician both of Soul and Body.

BE satisfied with the Condition in which God places you : However happy you may think me, I envy you. Pains and Sufferings would be a Paradise to me, while I should suffer with my God : And the greatest Pleasures would be Hell to me, if I could relish them without Him ; all my Consolation would be to suffer something for his Sake.

I MUST,

I MUST, in a little Time, go to GOD. What comforts me in this Life is, that I now see Him by Faith, and I see Him in such a Manner as might make me say sometimes, I believe no more, but I see. I feel what Faith teaches us, and in that Assurance and in that Practice of Faith, I will live and die with Him.

CONTINUE then always with GOD; it is the only Support and Comfort for your Affliction. I shall beseech Him to be with you.



### *The Third.*

IF we were all accustomed to the Exercise of the Presence of GOD, all bodily Diseases would be much alleviated thereby. GOD often permits that we should suffer a little to purify our Souls, and oblige us to continue with Him.

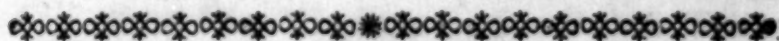
TAKE Courage, offer Him your Pains incessantly, pray to Him for Strength to endure them. Above all, pray for Grace to entertain yourself often with GOD, and forget Him the least you can. Adore Him in your Infirmities, offer yourself to Him from Time to Time; and in the Height of your Sufferings, beseech Him humbly and affectionately (as a Child his Father) to make you conformable to his holy Will. I shall endeavour to assist you with my poor Prayers.

I KNOW not how GOD will dispose of me, I am always happy: All the World suffer, and I, who deserve the severest Discipline, feel Joys so  
 conti-



continual, and so great, that I can scarce contain them.

I WOULD willingly ask of GOD a Part of your Sufferings, but that I know my Weakness, which is so great, that if He left me one Moment to myself, I should be the most wretched Man alive. And yet I know not how He can leave me alone, because Faith gives me as strong a Conviction as Sense can do, and He never forsakes us, 'till we have first forsaken Him. Let us fear to leave Him: Let us be always with Him: Let us live and die in his Presence. Do you pray for me, as I for you.



*The Fourth.*

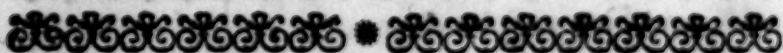
**I** RENDER Thanks to our LORD for having relieved you a little, according to your Desire.

I have been often near expiring, tho' I was never so much satisfied as then. Accordingly I did not pray for any Relief, but I pray'd for Strength to suffer with Courage, Humility and Love. Ah, how sweet is it to suffer with GOD! however great the Sufferings may be, receive them with Love. It is Paradise to suffer and be with Him: So that if in this Life we would enjoy the Peace of Paradise, we must accustom ourselves to a familiar, humble, affectionate Conversation with Him: We must hinder our Spirits wandering from Him upon any Occasion: We must make our Heart a spiritual Temple, wherein to adore Him incessantly: We must watch continually over ourselves, that we may not do, nor say, nor think



think any Thing that may displease Him. When our Minds are thus employed about GOD, Suffering will become full of Consolation.

I KNOW that to arrive at this State, the Beginning is very difficult; for we must act purely in Faith. But tho' it is difficult, we know also that we can do all Things with the Grace of GOD, which He never refuses to them who ask it earnestly. Knock, persevere in knocking, and I answer for it, that He will open to you in his due Time, and grant you all at once, what He has deferred during many Years. Adieu. Pray to Him for me, as I pray to Him for you. I hope to see Him quickly.



*The Fifth.*

**G**OD knoweth best what is needful for us, and all that He does is for our Good. If we knew how much He loves us, we should be always ready to receive equally, and with Indifference, from his Hands, the sweet and the bitter; all would please that come from Him. The sorest Afflictions never appear intolerable, but when we see them in a wrong Light: When we see them in the Hand of GOD, who dispenses them; when we know that it is our loving Father, who abases and distresses us, our Sufferings will lose their Bitterness, and become even Matter of Consolation.

LET

LET all our Employment be to know GOD : The more one knows Him, the more one desires to know Him. And as Knowledge is commonly the Measure of Love, the deeper and more extensive our Knowledge shall be, the greater will be our Love : And if our Love of GOD were great, we should love Him equally in Pains and Pleasures.

LET us not amuse ourselves, to seek or to love GOD merely for any sensible Favours (how elevated soever) which He has or may do us. Such Favours, tho' never so great, cannot bring us so near to GOD, as Faith does in one simple Act. Let us seek Him often by Faith. Do we not deserve Blame, if we leave Him to busy ourselves about Trifles, which do not please Him, and perhaps offend Him ? It is to be feared these Trifles will one Day cost us dear.

LET us begin to be devoted to Him in good Earnest. Let us cast every Thing besides out of our Hearts : He would possess them alone. Beg this Favour of Him. If we do what we can on our Parts, we shall soon see that Change wrought in us which we aspire after. I cannot thank Him sufficiently for the Relaxation He has vouchsafed you. I hope from his Mercy the Favour to see Him within a few Days. Let us pray for one another. I am, in our Lord,

*Yours, &c.*

---

\* He took his Bed two Days after, and died within the Week.



# CONVERSATIONS

WITH

B. LAURENCE.

*Translated from the FRENCH.*



## *First* CONVERSATION.

**T**HE first Time I saw B. *Laurence*, was upon the 3d of *August*, 1666. He told me, that GOD had done him a singular Favour in his Conversion at the Age of Eighteen.

**T**HAT in the Winter, seeing a Tree stripp'd of its Leaves, and considering that within a little Time the Leaves would be renew'd, and after that the Flowers and Fruit appear, he received an high View of the Providence and Power of GOD, which has never since been effaced from his Soul: That this View had perfectly set him loose from the World, and kindled in him such a Love for GOD, that he could not tell whether it had ever cooled at all, in above forty Years that he had lived since.

THAT

THAT he had been Footman to Mr. *Fieubert*, the Treasurer, and that he was a great awkward Fellow, who broke every Thing.

THAT he had desired to be received into a Monastery, thinking that his Bones would there be broke for his Aukwardness, and the Faults he should commit, and so He should sacrifice to God his Life, with its Pleasures: But that God had disappointed him, he having met with nothing but Satisfaction in that State.

THAT we should establish ourselves in a Sense of God's Presence, by continually conversing with Him. That it were a Shame to quit his Conversation, to think of Trifles and Fooleries.

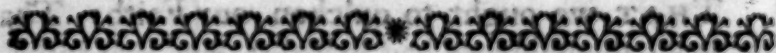
THAT we ought to quicken our Faith: That it was lamentable we had so little: And that instead of taking Faith for the Rule of their Conduct, Men amused themselves with trivial Devotions, which changed daily. That the Way of Faith was the Spirit of the Church, and that this alone was sufficient to bring us to a high Degree of Perfection.

THAT we ought to give ourselves up to God, with Regard both to Things temporal and spiritual, and seek our Satisfaction only in the fulfilling his Will, whether he lead us by Suffering or Consolation; for all would be equal to a Soul truly resign'd. That there needed Fidelity in those Drynesses, or Insensibilities and Irksomenesses in Prayer, by which God tries our Love to Him: That then was the Time for us to make good and effectual Acts of Resignation, whereof one alone would oftentimes very much promote our spiritual Advancement.



THAT as for the Miseries and Sins he heard of daily in the World, he was so far from wondering at them; that on the contrary, he was surprized there were not more, considering the Malice Sinners were capable of.

THAT to arrive at such Resignation as GOD required, we should watch attentively over all the Passions, which mingle as well in spiritual Things, as those of a grosser Nature; that GOD would give Light concerning those Passions, to those who truly desire to serve Him. That if this was my Design, *viz.* sincerely to serve GOD, I might come to him (*B. Laurence*) as often as I pleased, without any Fear of being troublesome: But if not, that I ought no more to visit him.



*Second CONVERSATION.*

Sept. 28, 1666.

THAT he had always been govern'd by Love, without selfish Views; and that having resolved to make the Love of GOD the End of all his Actions; he had found Reasons to be well satisfied with his Method. That he was pleased when he could take up a Straw from the Ground for the Love of GOD, seeking Him alone, and nothing else.

THAT he had been long troubled in Mind from a certain Belief that he should be damned; that all the Men in the World could not have persuaded him to the contrary, but that he had thus reasoned with



with himself about it: "I did not engage in a religious Life but for the Love of GOD, and I have endeavoured to act only for Him: Whatever becomes of me, whether I be lost or saved, I will always continue to act purely for the Love of GOD. I shall have this Good at least, that 'till Death I shall have done all that is in me to love Him." That this Trouble of Mind had lasted four Years; during which Time, he had suffered much.

THAT since that Time, he had passed his Life in perfect Liberty, and continual Joy. That he placed his Sins betwixt him and his GOD, as it were to tell Him, that he did not deserve his Favours, but that GOD still continued to bestow them in Abundance.

THAT he expected, after the pleasant Days GOD had given him, he should have his Turn of Pain and Suffering; but that he was not uneasy about it, knowing very well, that as he could do nothing of himself, GOD would not fail to give him the Strength to bear them.

THAT when an Occasion of practising some Virtue offered, he addressed himself to GOD, saying, LORD, *I cannot do this, unless thou enablest me:* And that then he received Strength sufficient.

THAT when he had fail'd in his Duty, he only confessed his Fault, saying to GOD, *I shall never do otherwise, if Thou leave me to myself; it is Thou must hinder my Falling, and mend what is amiss.* That after this, he soon found himself in Peace.

THAT we ought to act with GOD in the greatest Simplicity, speaking to Him frankly and plainly, and imploring his Assistance in our Affairs, just as they

they happen. That GOD never failed to grant it, as he had often experienced.

THAT he had been lately sent into *Burgundy*, to buy the Provision of Wine for the Society; which was a very unwelcome Task to him, because he had no Turn for Business, and because he was lame, and could not go about the Boat, but by rolling over the Casks. That however he gave himself no Uneasiness about it, nor about the Purchase of the Wine. That he said to GOD, *It was his Business he was about*; and that he afterward found it very well performed. That he had been sent into *Auvergne* the Year before upon the same Account: That he could not tell how the Matter passed, but that it proved very well.

So likewise in his Business in the Kitchen, (to which he had naturally a great Aversion) having accustomed himself to do every Thing there for the Love of GOD, and with Prayer upon all Occasions, for his Grace to do his Work well, he had found every Thing easy, during fifteen Years that he had been employed there.

THAT he was very well pleased with the Post he was in now; but that he was as ready to quit that as the former, since he was always pleasing himself in every Condition, by doing little Things for the Love of GOD.

THAT he retired to pray, according to the Directions of his Superior; but that he did not want such Retirement, because his greatest Business did not divert him from GOD.

THAT he was very sensible of his Faults, but he was not discouraged by them: That he confessed them

them to GOD; and when he had so done, he peaceably resumed his usual Practice of Love and Adoration.

THAT in his Trouble of Mind, he had consulted No-body; but knowing only by the Light of Faith, that GOD was present, he contented himself with directing all his Actions to Him, *i. e.* doing them with a Desire to please Him, let what would come of it.

THAT useless Thoughts spoil all; that the Mischief began there: But that we ought to reject them as soon as we perceived their Impertinence to the Matter in Hand, or our Salvation; and return to our Communion with GOD.

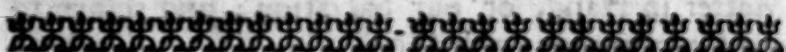
THAT all bodily Mortifications, and other Exercises, are useless, but as they serve to arrive at Union with GOD by Love: That he had well considered this, and found it the shortest Way to go strait to Him by a continual Exercise of Love, and doing all Things for his Sake.

THAT we ought to make a great Difference between the Acts of the Understanding, and those of the Will; that the first were comparatively of little Value, and the others all. That our only Business was, to love and delight ourselves in GOD.

THAT all possible Kinds of Mortification, if they were void of the Love of GOD, could not profit us. That we ought without Anxiety to expect the Pardon of our Sins from the Blood of *Jesus Christ*, only endeavouring to love him with all our Hearts: That GOD seem'd to have granted the greatest Favours to the greatest Sinners, as more signal Monuments of his Mercy.

THAT the greatest Pains or Pleasures of this World, were not to be compared with what he had experienced of both Kinds in his spiritual State: So that he was careful for nothing, and feared nothing, desiring one only Thing of GOD, viz. that he might not offend Him.

THAT he had no Scruples; for (said he) when I fail in my Duty, I readily acknowledge it, saying, *I am used to do so: I shall never do otherwise, if I am left to myself.* If I fail not, then I give GOD Thanks, acknowledging that it comes from Him.



### The Third CONVERSATION.

Nov. 22, 1666.

**H**E told me, that he had no other Care, but faithfully to reject every other Thought, that he might perform all his Actions for the Love of GOD. That when sometimes he had not thought of GOD for a good while, he did not disquiet himself for it; but after having acknowledged his Wretchedness to GOD, he returned to Him with so much the greater Trust in Him, by how much he found himself more wretched to have forgot him.

THAT the Trust we put in GOD, honours Him much, and draws down great Graces.

THAT it was impossible, not only that GOD should deceive, but also that He should long let a Soul.



Soul suffer, which is perfectly resigned to Him, and resolved to endure every Thing for his Sake.

THAT from the same Experience, when he had Business to do, he did not think of it before-hand; but when it was Time to do it, he found in God, as in a clear Mirror, all that was fit for him to do. That of late he had acted thus, without anticipating Care; but before the Experience above-mention'd, he had used it in his Affairs.

WHEN outward Business diverted him a little from the Thought of God, a fresh Remembrance coming from God invested his Soul, and so inflamed and transported him, that it was difficult for him to contain himself.

THAT he was more united to God in his outward Employments, than when he left them for Retirement.

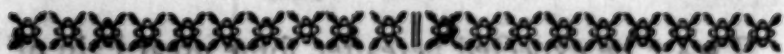
THAT he expected hereafter some great Pain of Body or Mind; that the worst that could happen to him was, to lose that Sense of God which he had enjoyed so long: But that the Goodness of God assured him He would not forsake him utterly, and that He would give him Strength to bear whatever Evil He permitted to happen to him; and therefore that he feared nothing, and had no Occasion to consult with any Body about his State. That when he had attempted to do it, he had always come away more perplexed; and that as he was conscious of his Readiness to lay down his Life for the Love of God, he had no Apprehension of Danger. That perfect Resignation to God was the sure Way to Heaven, a Way in which we had always sufficient Light for our Conduct.

THAT

THAT in the Beginning of the spiritual Life, we ought to be faithful in doing our Duty, and denying ourselves; but after that, unspeakable Pleasures followed. That in Difficulties we need only have Recourse to *Jesus Christ*, and beg his Grace, with which every Thing became easy.

THAT many do not advance in the Christian Progress, because they stick in Penances, and particular Exercises, while they neglect the Love of GOD, which is the End: That this appeared plainly by their Works, and was the Reason why we see so little solid Virtue.

THAT there needed neither Art nor Science for going to GOD, but only a Heart resolutely determined to apply itself to nothing but Him, or for his Sake, and to love Him only.



*The Fourth CONVERSATION.*

Nov. 25, 1667.

HE discoursed with me very fervently, and with great Openness of Heart, concerning his Manner of going to GOD.

He told me, that all consisted in one hearty Renunciation of every Thing which we are sensible does not lead to GOD; that we might accustom ourselves to a continual Conversation with Him, with Freedom, and in Simplicity. That we need only to recognize GOD intimately present within

us,

us, to address ourselves to Him every Moment, that we may beg his Assistance for knowing his Will in Things doubtful, and for rightly performing those, which we plainly see He requires of us; offering them to Him before we do them, and giving Him Thanks when we have done.

THAT in this continual Conversation with God, we are also employed in praising, adoring, and loving Him incessantly, for his infinite Goodness and Perfection.

THAT without being discouraged on Account of our Defects, we should pray for his Grace with a perfect Confidence, as relying upon the infinite Merits of our LORD. That God never failed offering us his Grace at each Action: That he distinctly perceived it, and never failed of it, unless when his Thoughts had wandered from a Sense of God's Presence, or he had forgot to ask his Assistance.

THAT God always gave us Light in our Doubts, when we had no other Design but to please Him.

THAT our Sanctification did not depend upon changing our Works, but in doing that for God's Sake, which we commonly do for our own.

THAT the most excellent Method he had found of going to God, was that of doing our common Business without any View of pleasing Men, and (as far as we are capable) purely for the Love of God.

THAT it was a great Delusion, to think that the Times of Prayer ought to differ from other Times: That we were as strictly obliged to adhere to

to GOD by Action in the Time of Action, as by Prayer in its Season.

THAT when the appointed Times of Prayer were past, he found no Difference, because he still continued with GOD, praising and blessing Him with all his Might; so that he passed his Life in continual Joy; yet hoped that GOD would give him somewhat to suffer, when he should grow stronger.

THAT we ought once for all, heartily to put our whole Trust in GOD, and make a total Surrender of ourselves to Him, secure that He would not deceive us.

THAT we ought not to be weary of doing little Things for the Love of GOD, who regards not the Greatness of the Work, but the Love with which it is performed. That we should not wonder if in the Beginning we often failed in our Endeavours, but that at last we should receive Grace, which will naturally produce its Fruits in us, to our exceeding great Delight.

THAT the whole Substance of Religion was Faith, Hope, and Charity; by the Practice of which we become united to GOD: That all beside is indifferent, and to be used only as Means, that we may arrive at our End, and be swallowed up therein.

THAT *all Things are possible to him who believes*, that they are easy to him who hopes, and pleasant to him who loves.

THAT the End we ought to propose to ourselves, is to become in this Life the most perfect Worshipers



pers of GOD we can possibly be, as we hope to be through all Eternity.

THAT when we enter upon the spiritual Life, we should consider and examine to the Bottom, what we are. And then we should find ourselves worthy of all Contempt, and such as do not deserve the Name of Christians, subject to all Kinds of Misery, and numberless Accidents, which trouble us, and cause perpetual Vicissitudes in our Health, in our Humours, in our internal and external Dispositions: In fine, Persons whom GOD would humble by many Pains and Labours, as well within as without. After this, we should not wonder that Troubles, Temptations, Oppositions, and Contradictions, happen to us from Men. We ought, on the contrary, to submit ourselves to them, and bear them as long as GOD pleases, as Things highly advantageous to us.

THAT the greater Perfection a Soul aspires after, the more dependent it is upon Divine Grace.

BEING question'd by one of his own Society (to whom he was obliged to open himself) by what Means he had attained such an habitual Sense of GOD? He told him, that since his first coming to the Monastery, he had considered GOD as the End of all his Thoughts and Desires, as the Mark to which they should tend, and in which they should terminate.

THAT when he had thus in Prayer fill'd his Mind with great Sentiments of that infinite Being, he went to his Work appointed in the Kitchen, (for he was Cook to the Society): There having first considered severally the Things his Office required,

quired, and when, and how each Thing was to be done; he spent all the Intervals of his Time, as well before as after his Work, in Prayer.

THAT when he began his Business, he said to GOD with a filial Trust in Him, *O my GOD, since Thou art with me, and I must now, in Obedience to thy Commands, apply my Mind to these outward Things, I beseech Thee to grant me the Grace to continue in thy Presence; and to this End, do Thou prosper me with thy Assistance, receive all my Works, and possess all my Affections.*

As he proceeded in his Work, he continued his familiar Conversation with his Maker, imploring his Grace, and offering to Him all his Actions.

WHEN he had finish'd, he examined himself, how he had discharged his Duty: If he found well, he returned Thanks to GOD; if otherwise, he asked Pardon; and without being discouraged, he set his Mind right again, and continued his Exercise of the Presence of GOD. Thus (said he) by rising after my Falls, and by frequently renewed Acts of Faith and Love, I am come to a State, wherein it would be as difficult for me not to think of GOD, as at first it was to accustom myself to it.

As B. Laurence had found such Advantage in walking in the Presence of GOD, it was natural for him to recommend it earnestly to others: But his Example was a stronger Inducement than any Arguments he could propose. His very Countenance was edifying; such a sweet and calm Devotion appearing in it, as could not but affect the Beholders. And it was observed, that in the greatest Hurry of

of Business in the Kitchen, he still preserved his Recollection and Heavenly-mindedness. He was never hasty nor loitering, but did each Thing in its Season, with an even uninterrupted Composure and Tranquility of Spirit. The Time of Business (said he) does not, with me, differ from the Time of Prayer; and in the Noise and Hurry of my Kitchen, while several Persons are at the same Time calling for different Things, I possess God in as great Tranquility, as if I were upon my Knees at the Sacrament.





A

## LETTER to one troubled in Mind.

*Translated from the FRENCH.*

**I** HAVE a Desire to write to you, but I know not what to say. However, I have put Pen to Paper, in Hopes that GOD will furnish me with such Matter as He shall think fit.

I UNDERSTAND, my dear Friend, that you have been somewhat troubled in Mind, upon Account of the Discovery you have made of your Wretchedness. I praise GOD for it: It shews that He will no longer delay the Accomplishment of his Divine Work in you. To this all his Dispensations concerning you tend, and especially the great Trials which you have hitherto sustained by his Divine Assistance.

As for me, all unworthy as I am, I have formerly often besought the LORD with many Tears, that He would grant me the Grace to make me know myself. His great Goodness has condescended to my earnest Request; but to say what I thereupon discovered within myself, as I alone felt it, so I alone can rightly comprehend it: But I must say, that before this, I was very ignorant of my true Condition.

BEFORE



BEFORE this, I thought I had a great Zeal for the Glory of GOD, and that I was sufficiently instructed in the Faith and Knowledge of *Jesus Christ*. But by the Direction of GOD, a certain Person well known to you, who had an affectionate Concern for my Soul, told me one Day, "that I had not a true Faith in *Jesus Christ*, as a Redeemer, who should deliver me from my Sins." It was at this Time that I began to be uneasy about my State; and as I did not yet know myself, it was to me a strange and unintelligible Language to hear, that I had not yet the true Faith. He would not then further explain himself; but only advised me, that I should offer myself up entirely to Him, who alone could make me free; and that with the holy Patriarch *Jacob*, I should not cease striving with Prayers and Tears, 'till the LORD had heard me favourably. I thought this very good Advice; for I saw plainly, that to call upon GOD must be a secure Way, and free from Delusion. So without any further Delay, I, by the Grace of GOD, resigned myself totally into his blessed Hands, that He might do with me what He pleased.

THE good GOD accepting that Moment the Oblation I had made of myself, vouchsafed so to touch my Heart with his Divine Love, that I became, as it were, all inflamed with its Ardours. I made a Resolution, never for the future to value any Thing but Him; and that to please Him should be my only Business. I would no more use any of my Faculties, but to honour and serve Him. I seem'd to myself perfectly ready to follow Him, through whatever Ways He should please to lead me. I thought no Crosses too heavy for me; and my Love made me embrace them all within my Heart. I said to Him, *Take me in Hand, O LORD, and spare me not: Here I am before Thee, O take*

*me in Hand.* As for the World, I let it pass for what it is, and took no farther Thought about it; my Heart seem'd to me too noble to cleave to any Thing in it. I valued my Divine Lover to such a Degree, that nothing in the Earth could any more affect me. One only Thing sufficed me, and that was, to be able to follow Him. No Way was too difficult for me; no Cross too bitter; no Troubles too many; and, in a Word, I was ready to endure every Thing with Him. I was content with all that might happen, provided only that I might find Him. If all the Kingdoms of the Earth had been offered me, I would have disdained so much as to think of them. I would gladly have been stripp'd of all Things; my Divine Lover sufficed me. I embraced Him sweetly in my Heart with the Arms of Love; and He, on his Part, condescended towards me, and made me know, that He is the true Lover of Souls. It was a wonderful State which I was in at that Time; if it could have been manifested to the World, it would have appeared very extraordinary; but there was still within me Matter of Reprehension, tho' I was not sensible of it. However, I continued so happy in my Beloved, that altho' I should have been forced to live without other Company, Vagabond in a Desert, I should have found no Difficulty in it. This State had not lasted long, when, in Effect, I found myself led into a Desert; but it was the Desert of myself, and there I lost Him whom my Soul loved. This Loss was so intolerable, that being extravagant with the Vehemence of my Love, I ran about like one distracted in Search of Him, but without finding Him; *for the Spouse had withdrawn Himself.*

THEN it was that I found myself in a forlorn Condition, that I knew myself altogether poor, wretched,

wretched, and miserable; and that I saw my Vessel to be filled with Uncleanneſs and Iniquity.

THE proper Source of this Grief, is the Knowledge of ourſelves, by which we find that there is an extreme Unlikeness between GOD and us. We see ourſelves most opposite to Him, and that our inmost Soul is entirely corrupted, depraved, and full of all Kind of Evil and Malignity, such as Self-will, Self-love, Vain-glory, and, in a Word, all the Injustice which Selfishness includes: And thus I found within me Sin, Death, Satan, Hell, the World, the Flesh, and all Sorts of Abominations.

YOU may imagine what Consternation I was in; it was so great, that if the GOD of Mercy had not, by his infinite Love, drawn me unto Him, I should never have presumed to have gone to Him, so extreme was the Shame and Confusion that covered me. Even yet, when I reflect upon it, I say to Him sometimes, *How, O my GOD, could I be so presumptuous, as to offer Thee such an Heart, so impure, so depraved, and corrupted! Alas, I knew not that I was in such a depraved Condition, 'till thy Goodness manifested it unto me! Yet blessed be thy holy Name for this unspeakable Benefit, I mean, that Thou hast discovered to me my Corruption, that Thou mightest deliver me from it. It is indeed thy principal Business to exercise Man, and bring him Home to his own Heart, that he may be capable at length to enjoy Thee, for thy Delights are to dwell with Men; but first the Dwelling-Place must be cleansed and purified, for Thou art the Holy One, before whom no Impurity may subsist, and whom only the pure in Heart can see. The Love of Pleasure, the Love of Creatures, Concupiscence, and Selfishness; all these must be done away:*

*They must be not only mortified, but dead, to render us capable of thy full Communications.*

IT is for this Thou hast so often invited, and even besought us, that we would come to Thee, that Thou mightest be our Deliverer, our Physician, and our Saviour: It is for this Thou didst forsake thy Glory, and endure so much Pain and Misery upon Earth, even that Thou mightest reduce wandering Sinners, and exterminate Sin. O how horrid a Mischief must Sin be in thy Sight, seeing it cost Thee so dear to expiate it! O what Bitterness of Grief, what Agonies of Pain, possessed Thee, when the bloody Sweat trickled down thy sacred Body to the Ground! O the powerful and piercing Love which Thou didst bear towards Souls! That great Love still constraineth Thee to accomplish thy holy Work in us. Those who persevere in the spiritual Life, know it well; but to express what they experience, is impossible. May the LORD be eternally praised, honoured, and magnified by his whole Creation. Amen.

I AM not ignorant, my dear Friend, that you have many Crosses and Afflictions; but they will all turn to your Good. The Divine Spouse of your Soul will direct them all to your Advantage; only continue faithful to Him unto the Death, and (so far is He from forsaking you) He will certainly protect you from all Danger. Your Soul is dear and precious to Him, and He keeps it as the Apple of his Eye: He holds it secure in his Hand, that none may ravish it from Him. Neither Men, nor Satan, can hurt it. Your Saviour is your Defender. He will be your Buckler, and exceeding great Reward; for He is Love, and Love must be communicative, and impart itself to others. I have found so by Experience; but my Pen is not capable of expressing the exceeding great Love, which He has  
shew'd



shew'd to so unworthy a Creature as I am. But if the LORD has vouchsafed so great Favours to such a Wretch, (and GOD knows what Reason I have to call myself so) what shall not those, who are faithful to Him, find at his Hands?

Do you then cast all your Cares upon Him, that He may conduct you, and give you such Success as He thinks fit. He will be your Guide through all the Ways He makes you to walk in. And tho' you sink deep in the Waters of Affliction, so that they come in even to your Soul, and seem ready to overflow it; yet the Lover of your Soul will help you out again: For, as I said, He is Love itself; and that Love being GOD, is so powerful, so jealous, so intense, so inflamed, so penetrating, that I know not what Name to call it by; its Force and Efficacy are unutterable: The Floods and Tempests of Affliction, instead of quenching it, serve rather to make it more inflamed in our Soul, even to such a Degree, that sometimes she dissolves, as it were, in the sacred Ardours of Love, especially in those Moments, when the LORD makes her know, in a sensible Manner, that He would rather chuse to suffer over again all the Grievs and Pains of his Passion, than forsake her.

O MY dear Friend, what a great and incomparable Love is this! Be then of good Courage. That Love can well conduct you, and bring Matters to a good Conclusion, altho' you seem to find yourself daily more and more indisposed. Know it is this Love Himself who discovers to you your Indispositions, and the Disorders of your Soul, only to deliver you from them, and thereby to prepare you for Himself, and render you acceptable in his Sight; for He desires to dwell in you, according to his gracious Promise, *John xiv. 23. We will come unto you,*

*you, and make our Abode with you.* Certainly for the Entertainment of such Guests, so worthy of all Honour and Praise, the Place ought to be prepared according to the Quality of those who are to dwell there.

**O** STRANGE Humiliation of the Divine Majesty, to stoop so low, as to concern Himself with the Abominations of Sin, that He might cleanse our Hearts from it, and prepare in them a Place for Himself! Offer Him then your Heart continually, for that End. I know well in what Condition you will be, as you come nearer to Him: For, as I told you, He makes us know ourselves, and our Wretchedness, on Purpose to deliver us from ourselves, that is, from Evil.

**T**HE most deplorable Wretchedness is to continue in Sin; for that is to continue separated from **GOD**: Sin being the only Thing that hinders our Union with Him. I believe, and know, **O LORD**, that Thou canst deliver me from my Sin; that Thou art the Truth, which canst set me free from myself: And yet I bless thy holy Name, that Thou hast vouchsafed to make me know this Self, and what it is capable of. The Knowledge of myself ought to humble me, not only before **GOD**, but also before the Creatures; and particularly, it ought to cure me of all Inclination to judge my Neighbour, and make me for the future never complain of any Body but myself.

**T**HAT is a grievous Fault, and yet a very common one; I mean, Censoriousness, and finding Fault with others; whence it often happens, that even the Servants of **GOD** are suspected, and Men warn one another to be aware of them, while they are actually employed by **GOD**, as his Instruments

to reclaim Men to his Service. All this comes from our Ignorance of ourselves; for if we knew ourselves, we should rather warn Men to be aware of us, for Fear of being infected with our Corruption. May the LORD vouchsafe to open our Eyes, that we may see our own Darknes, and our own Faults.

O FATHER of Mercies, may I find Acceptance in thy Sight, and with my Prayers and Tears, obtain of Thee an Heart sunk in the profoundest Humility! I ask not Joy, nor Consolation; I ask only a pliant Heart, a Heart alway submissive and resign'd to Thee in all Accidents, or whatever ill Usage may happen to me. Dispose of me as Thou pleasest, and may thy Will be done, O God, in Time and in Eternity! *Amen.*

O DEAREST Friend, methinks I cannot leave off Writing, my Heart is so enlarged towards you, you employ it Night and Day. Well then, let Love have its Way: I speak not of any natural Affection, but of a supernatural Love, which the LORD Himself produces in the Soul; *that Love which is shed abroad in our Hearts by the Holy Ghost.* This Divine Love has no selfish Motive or Aim: And though it should meet Crosses and Sufferings from the beloved Object, yet they would not discourage it: Nay more, though it were to die by the Hands of the Beloved, yet would it applaud the Execution, and at the same Time do all it could to serve Him: So powerful is the Ardour of this Love, *John xiii. 5.*

BUT who is the Beloved, to whom it thus adheres? It is He from whom it drew its Existence; it is its own Source and Original, who makes it what it is, who so powerfully inflames it, that it is

no

no more solicitous about Sufferings or Enjoyments, provided only that it may love: To love suffices Love.

THIS is what all Self-love is absolutely incapable of; for Nature is ever seeking her own Satisfaction: She seeks Comfort and Delight; and when she misses them, grows uneasy and dissatisfied. She fancies that every Thing belongs to her; she would have her Share in every Thing: She is ignorant that she has no Claim to any Thing, that she must die, and be destroyed; and if she knew it beforehand, she would pine away with Grief and Despair.

FOR Nature will not consent to Sufferings, and she dreads them, so that she shudders for Fear; and yet she must go through them: But the LORD at first conceals them, and after makes her enter into them when He thinks fit; and then she must go on whether she will or no, for all Resistance is vain. Blessed be the LORD, that then He has no Regard to her Complaint: Nature only detains the Soul in Prison, and the LORD will deliver it thence, *having redeemed it with his own Blood*. The precious Soul has cost Him too dear to forsake or neglect it, 'till He has brought it back to its Source, that is, Himself, that it may enjoy Him.

SUCH Love does the LORD bear to the Soul of Man; and whatever Opposition its Enemies, the Flesh and *Satan*, may make to detain the Soul captive in their Chains, all their Efforts will be confounded under his Almighty Power. He is the stronger, who will come upon them, and overcome them, and divide their Spoils. He is the King and Conqueror of the Soul's Enemies: He is a Buckler and Defence, upon which the Soul may securely



securely rely; and He will re-establish its Peace, for the Love He beareth it.

INDEED his Love of Souls is so exceeding great, that it is impossible to describe or express what one feels of it. He is their Surety, their Corner Stone, and their Support. If the Soul be weak, let it come to Him, and He will be its Strength; if it be sick, He will be its Physician; if it be hungry, He will feed it with Love; if it be thirsty, He will give Himself to it for Refreshment; if it be in Darkness, He will enlighten it; if it be encompassed with Enemies, He will defend it; the Soul need only keep quiet and retired within itself, and Love will do all the rest, for *His is the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory, for ever and ever.* Amen.

LET us, my dear Friend, from this Time forward, pass our Life in a spiritual Recollection. Let us always turn our Attention inward; and although we find there Pain and Uneasiness, yet let us remember, that such is the Will of Him, who loves us, and will make all Things work together for our Good. Let us receive all then as from his Hand, without Distinction or Exception. How happy should we be, if the View and Sense of our Wretchedness would but lead us to Humility! My Desires are exceedingly inflamed for an Heart perfectly obedient. I seek not Sweetnesses nor Consolations, I wish only for an Heart perfectly submissive to GOD.

O LORD of Lords, O Fountain of Love and Goodness, grant me such an Heart, subjected to Thee, and humbled beneath all Men! O LORD, Thou knowest what I am, and I too partly know it, for thy Goodness has discovered it to me; and may thy Name be ever blessed for that Benefit! O  
that

that this would sink me continually in the Abyſs of my Vileness! Grant, O LORD, that I may never make any Account of myself, or imagine myself something; for that would be to fall from Thee, and give Place to *Satan*. O let me rather live a Life of continual Affliction with my crucified *Jesus*! *Jesus*, whom I heartily beseech to be my dear Friend's Defender. When you bear his holy Cross, you will then be adorned with those Jewels, which your sacred Lover bestows upon you, even the same He wore Himself; with which I recommend you to his Love, beseeching Him to preserve you from all Evil.

TAKE in good Part the plain Open-heartedness of this Letter, and believe me,

*Yours, &c.*

*Amsterdam.*

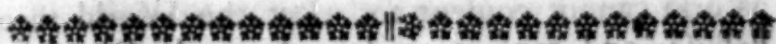
MARY HENRICS.





## PIOUS REFLECTIONS.

*Translated from the FRENCH.*



### I.

*How scarce true Faith is.*

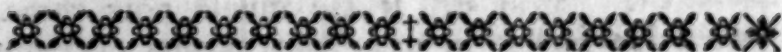
I. **W**HEN the Son of Man cometh, shall He find Faith on the Earth? Luke xviii. 8. If He should now come, would He find it in us? What Fruits of Faith have we to shew? Do we look upon this Life only as a short Passage to a better? Do we believe that we must suffer with *Jesus Christ*, before we can reign with Him? Do we consider this World as a deceitful Appearance, and Death as the Entrance to true Goods? Do we live by Faith? Does it animate us? Do we relish the eternal Truths it presents us with? Are we as careful to nourish our Souls with those Truths, as to maintain our Bodies with proper Diet? Do we accustom ourselves to see all Things in the Light of Faith? Do we correct all our Judgments by it? Alas, the greater Part of Christians think and act like mere Heathens. If we judge (as we justly may) of their Faith by their Practice, we must conclude they have no Faith at all.

VOL. XXXVIII.

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II. LET

II. LET us fear lest the Kingdom of GOD should be taken from us, and given to others who may bear better Fruits. That Kingdom of GOD is Faith reigning in us, and governing all our Thoughts. Happy he who has Eyes to see this Kingdom. Flesh and Blood cannot discern it. The Wisdom of the animal Man is wilfully blind to it: The inward Operations of GOD appear as a Dream to him. To know the Wonders of GOD's Kingdom we must be born again; and to be born again we must die: This is what the World cannot consent to. Let the World then despise, and censure, and condemn the Truth as it pleases: As for us, O LORD, Thou hast commanded us to believe, and to taste thy heavenly Gift. We desire to be of the Number of thine Elect, and we know that no Person can be of that Number who does not conform his Life to what Thou teachest.



## II.

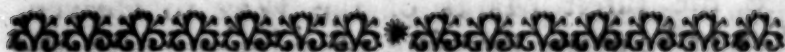
*Of the only Way to Heaven.*

I. **STRIVE** to enter in at the strait Gate, Matt. vii. 13. The Kingdom of Heaven is not to be enter'd but by Violence: It must be taken as it were by Assault, like a besieged Place. The Gate is strait and narrow, we must bow, we must bend, we must make ourselves little to gain Admittance. The great Gate, which opens wide, and is passed by Multitudes, leads to Perdition. All broad and smooth Ways are dangerous. Woe to us when the World favours us, and our Life seems



seems void of Trouble. Crosses and Difficulties are the surest Marks of the Way to Heaven. Let us be aware therefore of going on with the Multitude, and let us seek the Traces of the Few; let us follow the Footsteps of the Saints along the craggy Paths of Repentance; climbing over Rocks, seeking secure Places in the Sweat of our Face, and expecting that the last Step of our Lives should be still a violent Struggle to enter the narrow Gate of Eternity.

II. WE are not predestinated by God, but to be made conformable to the Image of his Son; to be fastned, as He was, to a Cross; renouncing, as He did, all sensual Pleasures; and to be content, like Him, in the Midst of Sufferings. But, blind as we are, we would get down from this Cross which unites us to our Master. We cannot leave the Cross, but we must also forsake *Christ* crucified; for the Cross and He are inseparable. Let us then live and die with Him, who came to shew us the true Way to Heaven; and let our only Fear be, lest we should not finish our Sacrifice on the same Altar whereon his was consummated. Alas! all our Endeavours here tend only to be more at Ease, and thereby to withdraw ourselves from the true Way to Heaven. We know not what we do. We do not comprehend the Mystery of Grace, which joins a Beatitude with Tears, pronouncing the Mourners happy. The Way which leads to a Throne is delightful, altho' it should be overgrown with Thorns: The Way which leads to a Precipice is dreadful, altho' it should be covered with Roses. We suffer indeed in the strait Way, but we hope: We suffer, but we see Heaven open: We suffer, but we chuse to suffer; we love God, and are beloved of Him.



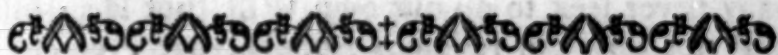
## III.

*Of Patience in Suffering.*

I. *I*N your Patience possess ye your Souls, Luke xxi. 19. The Soul loses itself by Impatience; whereas, when it submits without repining, it possesses itself in Peace, and it also possesses God. To be impatient, is to will what one has not; or not to will what one has. An impatient Soul is a Slave to Passion, having cast off the Restraints of Reason and Faith: What Weakness! What Error is this! As long as we will the Evil we endure, it is not Evil; why then should we make it a real Evil, by refusing to bear it willingly: The inward Peace resides not in the Senses or inferior Appetites, but in the Will. It may be preserved amidst the bitterest Sorrows, as long as the Will continues in a firm Resignation. Peace here below consists not in an Exemption from Suffering, but in a voluntary Acceptance of it.

II. To hear your Murmuring and Repining, it would seem that you are the most innocent Soul living; and that it is a great Injustice that you are not admitted into the terrestrial Paradise. Remember how you have offended God, and you must acknowledge his righteous Dealing with you. Confess to Him, with the Humility of the Prodigal Son, *Father, I have sinned against Heaven, and Thee*; thy merciful Hand executes what I should never have had the Courage to do; it corrects

rects me in Love. Grant also that I may endure with Patience its salutary Corrections. If a Sinner has a just Indignation against himself, the least he can do is to receive the Medicine which he has not the Fortitude to chuse.



IV.

*Of Submission and Conformity to the Will  
of GOD.*

I. *THY Will be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven.*

Nothing is done here, any more than in Heaven, but by the Will or Permission of GOD; but Men do not always love that Will, because it is often opposite to their Desires. If we sincerely loved this Will of GOD, and only this, we should change our Earth into an Heaven: We should thank GOD for every Thing, for Evil as well as Good; because Evil would become Good from his Hand: We should not then murmur at the Guidance of Providence; but approve and adore it. O my GOD, what do I see in the Course of the Stars, in the Revolutions of Seasons, in the Events of Life, but the Accomplishment of thy Will? May it also be accomplished in me: May I love it: May it sweeten and endear all Events to me: May I annihilate my own, to make thy Will reign in me: For it is thine, O LORD, to will, and mine to obey.

II. THOU hast said, O LORD JESUS, of Thyself, with Relation to thy heavenly Father, *That Thou always didst what pleased Him,* John viii. 29.

Teach us how far that Example should lead us. Thou art our Pattern: Thou didst nothing upon Earth but according to the Will of thy Father, who vouchsafes also to be called ours. Do Thou fulfill his Will in us, as Thou didst in Thyself. Grant, that we being inseparably united to Thee, may never seek to do our own Will, but His; so that not only our religious Actions, but even our Eating, Sleeping, Conversing, may all be done with no other View but that of pleasing Him: Then shall our whole Conduct be sanctified: Then shall all our Deeds become a continual Sacrifice, incessant Prayer, and uninterrupted Love. When, O LORD, shall we arrive at this Disposition? Do Thou vouchsafe to conduct us thither: Do Thou vouchsafe to subdue our rebellious Will by thy Grace, for it knows not what it would have, and nothing is truly good, but a Conformity to thy Will.



## V.

*Of the right Use of Afflictions.*

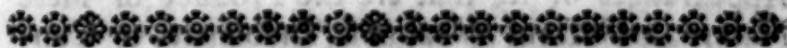
I. **THEY** who are Christ's have crucified the Flesh with the Affections and Lusts, Gal. v. 24. The more we fear Crosses, the more Reason have we to think that we want them: Let us not be discouraged, when the Hand of GOD layeth heavy ones upon us. We ought to judge of the Violence of our Disease, by the Violence of the Remedies which our spiritual Physician prescribes us. It is a great Argument of our own Wretchedness, and of GOD's Mercy, that notwithstanding

ing.



ing the Difficulty of our Recovery, He vouchsafes to undertake our Cure. Let us then draw from our very Afflictions a Source of Love, of Comfort and Trust in GOD, saying with his Apostle, *Our light Affliction, which is but for a Moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory*, 2 Cor. iv. 17. Blessed are they which mourn, and sow in Tears, because they shall reap with ineffable Joy the Harvest of eternal Felicity.

II. I AM crucified with Christ, said St. Paul, we are fastned to the Cross with Him, and by Him; for his Grace keeps us there, and for his Sake we chuse to continue there, lest by forsaking it, we should depart from Him. O suffering and adorable *Jesus!* to whose Sacrifice I unite myself, do Thou communicate to me, together with thy Cross, also thy Spirit of Love and Resignation: Make me think less of my Sufferings, than of the Happiness of Suffering with Thee: Make me love Thee, and I shall not fear the Cross; and tho' my Sufferings should be very great, yet will they not be greater than I chuse to endure.



## VI.

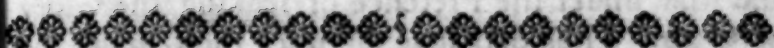
*Of Meekness and Humility.*

I. **L**EARN of Me, for I am meek, and lowly of Heart, Matt. xi. 29. If any other than *Jesus* had taught this Lesson, the Imperfection of the Teacher would have furnish'd us with Objections to the Doctrine: He therefore taught it Himself, and that too by his own Example, which  
is

is such as should silence all Objections; such as should make us adore, be confounded, and imitate. What, the Son of GOD descends from Heaven to Earth, takes a corruptible Body, and dies upon the Cross, to shame us out of our Pride! He who is All, annihilates Himself; and I, who am Nothing, would be, at least would have others think me, quite other than what I am! What an impudent Vanity, and diabolical Presumption is this, our LORD saith not, *Be ye meek and lowly*; but He saith, *I am meek and lowly of Heart*; it is enough to know that He is humble, to conclude that we ought to be so. His Example is such an Authority as none may find a Dispensation from, much less the Sinner, who may well chuse Humility, when he has deserved Damnation.

II. OUR LORD joins Meekness with Humility, because Humility is the Source of true Meekness. Pride is ever haughty, impatient and captious; but he who despises himself, is content to be despised: He who thinks nothing due to him, will not think himself neglected. The true Virtue of Meekness, is never the Effect of Constitution; all Appearances of it, that are the Product of mere Nature, arise from Weakness, Indolence, or Cunning. To be meek towards others, we must renounce ourselves.





## VII.

*Of the one Thing needful.*

I. *THOU* art troubled and careful about many Things, but one Thing is needful, Luke x. 41. We think we have many Businesses to do, and we have but one: If that be performed, the others are included in it; if that miscarry, whatever Success the others may seem to have, they will all come to nothing. Why should we then divide our Heart, and our Care? O my only Business, thou shalt henceforth be my only Care! In the Ray of divine Light I will each Moment peaceably perform, according to my Abilities, what Providence puts in my Way. I will be careful for nothing else, because nothing else is my Business.

II. I HAVE finished the Work which Thou, O Father, gavest Me to do, John xvii. 4. Each of us should be able to say as much at the Day of Judgment. I ought to consider the Business which occurs in the daily Order of Providence, as the Work which God appoints me; and I should apply myself to it in a Manner worthy of God, viz. with Exactness and Tranquility. I ought not to neglect any Thing, or be passionately vehement about any Thing, for it is dangerous to do the Work of the LORD negligently on the one Hand, or on the other, to appropriate it to ourselves by Self-love and false Zeal: In this last Case we do our Actions from a Principle of Self-will;

will; we are eager and anxious for the Success, and that under the Pretence of seeking the Glory of GOD. Thus Self-love disguises itself under the Appearance of Zeal, and grieves, and is afflicted, when it miscarries in its Designs. O GOD, grant to me the Grace to be faithful in the Action, and resigned as to the Success! My only Business is to do thy Will, and to do it as thy Will, not forgetting Thee in the Performance of it: It is Thine to give my feeble Endeavours the Success Thou pleasest, even none if Thou seekest fit.



## VIII.

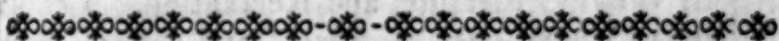
*Of inward Peace.*

I. **PEACE** I leave with you, my Peace I give unto you, not as the World giveth, give I unto you, John xiv. 27. All Men seek Peace, but they seek it where it is not to be found; they seek it in the World; which is ever promising, but can never give us a solid Peace: That is the Gift of *Christ* alone, who reconciles the Man to Himself, subdues the Passions, sets Bounds to the Desires, inspires the Hopes of eternal Bliss, and gives the Joy of the Holy Ghost; such a Joy as persists in the Midst of Sufferings, and flowing from an inexhaustible Source, becomes a perpetual Spring of Delight, which the World cannot interrupt or diminish.

II. TRUE Peace is not to found but in the Possession of GOD; and the Possession of GOD cannot be attained but by Faith and Obedience:  
Remove



Remove all forbidden Objects : Renounce all unlawful Desire : Cast off all earnest Care and Anxiety : Desire only GOD : Seek only GOD ; and then you shall have Peace, such a Peace as the World shall not be able to disturb. For what can trouble you ? Is it Poverty, Disgrace, Disappointments, outward or inward Crosses ? You should see all these in the Hand of GOD as real Favours, which He distributes to his Friends, and which He vouchsafes to give you a Share in. Then the World will have a new Appearance to you, and your Peace prove inviolable.



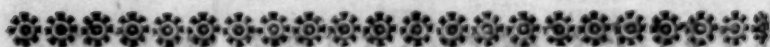
IX.

*Of deceitful Joys.*

I. *SAID of Laughter, it is mad ; and of Mirth, what doth it ?* Eccles. ii. 2. The Joys of worldly-minded Men are like those of delirious Persons, who have lost their Reason by Distemper. Delusion is the only Cause of their Pleasure ; they think themselves in Abundance, when in Reality they are quite destitute. Death will end this Dream of Folly, and when they awake, they shall be confounded at their Poverty. Miserable therefore are those whom the false Pleasures of the World render incapable of true Consolation. Let us say continually of such vain *Mirth, what doth it ?* Nothing is a solid Subject of Joy but our Hopes of GOD's Favour ; all other Delight is but a Dream.

II. JESUS

II. JESUS said to the Woman of Samaria, *Whoever drinketh of this Water, shall thirst again.* John iv. 13. This may be apply'd to all worldly Satisfaction; the more we enjoy them, the more we want them. The Possession of Riches does but increase our Thirst after them. Avarice and Ambition are more uneasy about what they have not, than pleased with what they have. The Enjoyment of Pleasure softens the Soul, depraves it, and makes it insatiable. The more we divert ourselves, the more we want Diversion; and it is easier to persevere in a State of Fervour and Penitence, than to recover it again when we have given Way to Pleasure and Relaxation. Let us therefore watch over ourselves, and abstain from those Waters, which will but increase our Thirst. Let us keep our Heart with Care, that it be not seduced by the vain Joys of the World, which will end only in Despair.



## X.

*Of Holy Tears.*

I. **BLESSED** are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted, Matt. v. 4. What new Kind of Tears are these? (saith St. *Austin*) they make happy those who shed them. This Happiness consists in being afflicted for the Wickedness of the World; many Dangers which surround us, and the inexhaustible Corruption of our own Hearts. It is a great Gift of God to fear losing his Love; to fear lest we should wander from the strait Way. The Saints shed Tears for this.

It is difficult to rejoice while one is in Danger of losing what one values most, and of losing ones self with it. It is impossible not to be afflicted, while one sees nothing but Vanity, Error, Offences, Forgetfulness, and Contempt of the GOD we love. Grief is due to so many sad Occasions of Sorrow: Our Grief shall be pleasing in the Sight of GOD. He Himself inspires it; his Love causes our Tears to flow, and He Himself shall wipe them from our Eyes.

WE hear *Jesus Christ* say, *Woe unto you that laugh now, for ye shall mourn and weep. Woe unto you that are rich, for ye have received your Consolation*, Luke vi. 24, 25. and yet Men seek Mirth and Riches. He also saith, *Blessed are they that weep*; yet they fear nothing more than Sorrow. We should grieve here, not only for the Dangers of our own State, but for every Thing that is vain and criminal. We should weep for ourselves and for others: All deserve our Tears. Happy the Tears which spring from Grace, which makes us disrelish these transitory Things, and produce in us the Desire of the good Things of Eternity.



## XI.

### *Of Worldly Wisdom.*

THE Wisdom of Worldly-minded Men must needs be great, since our LORD assures us, that is greater than that of the Children of GOD; yet with all its Pretensions and fair Appearances, it is fatal to those who follow it. This

VOL. XXXVIII. F crooked

crooked and subtle Wisdom is most opposite to that of GOD, which is ever plain and simple ; and what does it avail its Professors, seeing they are always taken in their own Devices ? The Apostle St. *James* saith of this Kind of Wisdom, that is is *Earthly, Animal, (or Sensual) and Devilish*, Jam. iii. 15. *Earthly*, because it confines its Care to the getting or possessing the Things of the Earth : *Animal*, or Sensual, because it seeks only to make Provision for gratifying the Passions or sensual Appetites ; and *Devilish*, because to the Subtilty and Penetration of a Demon, it joins also the Malice. Men so qualified, think to impose upon others, but in the Event, they deceive only themselves.

II. BLIND therefore are all those who think themselves wise without the Grace of *Jesus Christ*, which only can make us truly wise. They are like those who in a Dream think themselves awake, and believe all the Objects they imagine, to be true and real : And while they are pursuing their vain Projects of Pleasure or Ambition (so great is the Infatuation that possesses them) they see not what lies in the Way before them, sometimes Disgrace, always Death, Judgment, and Eternity. These great Objects daily advance, and approach nearer to prophane Men ; yet they see them not. Their political Skill foresees every Thing, but the inevitable Fall and Annihilation of all they set their Hearts upon. O mad and infatuated, when will ye open your Eyes to the Light of *Jesus Christ*, which discovers the Emptiness of all Grandeur here below ?





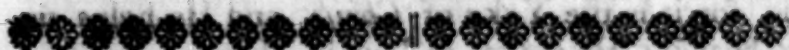
## XII.

*Of the Easiness of CHRIST's Yoke.*

**M**<sup>R</sup> Yoke is easy, and my Burthen light, Matt. xi. 30. Let not the Name of Yoke deter us, for it is the Yoke of *Christ*, and He helps us to bear it; He makes us love it; He endears it to us by the inward Charms of Righteousness and Truth: He gives a Disgust for false Pleasure, and renders the Practice of Virtue delightful: He supports the Man against himself, frees him from original Corruption, and makes him strong notwithstanding his Weakness. What fearest thou, O Man of little Faith? Let GOD exert Himself in thee: Abandon thyself to Him: You shall suffer, but you shall suffer with Love and inward Tranquillity: You shall fight, but you shall gain the Victory; the LORD Himself shall fight for you, and reward your Success: You shall weep, but your Tears shall be pleasing, and GOD shall Himself wipe them from your Eyes: You will be restrained from following your Passions, but after a free Sacrifice of your Liberty, you will find another Kind of Liberty, unknown to the World, and more valuable than universal Empire.

WHAT Blindness is it to fear engaging too far with GOD! The more we love Him, the more we shall love his Commandments. That Love will comfort us in Losses, sweeten our Crosses, set us free from all other dangerous Affections, make us see even through a Cloud of Afflictions,

the Mercy that dispenses them to us, and make us discover in Death itself eternal Glory and Bliss. What then are we afraid of? Can we have too much of GOD? Is it a Misfortune to be freed from the heavy Yoke of the World, and to bear the light Burthen of *Jesus Christ*? Do we fear to be too happy, too much deliver'd from ourselves, from the Caprices of our Pride, the Violence of our Passions, and the Tyranny of this deceitful World?



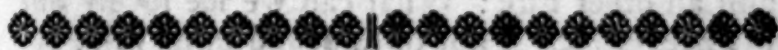
## XIII.

*Of spending our Time well.*

**L**ET us do Good while we have Time, Gal. vi. 10. *The Night cometh, in which no Man can work,* John ix. 4. Time is precious, but Men know not its true Value; nor will they learn it, 'till it is too late. Our Friends ask it of us, and we bestow it as if it were nothing worth; nay sometimes it is a Burthen we want to get rid of; yet the Day will come when we shall think one Quarter of an Hour more valuable than all the Treasures of the Earth. GOD, most liberal and bounteous of all other Things, teaches us, by the frugal Dispensation of his Providence, how careful we ought to be to make a good Use of Time, because He never gives two Moments together, nor grants us a second, 'till He has withdrawn the first, still keeping the Third in his own Hand, so that we are in a perfect Uncertainty whether we shall have it or no. Time is given us to prepare for Eternity, and Eternity will not be too long to regret

regret our lost Time, if we have made an ill Use of it.

II. ALL our Life, as well as all our Heart, is due to GOD; they are neither of them too much for Him: He gave them only that we might love and serve Him: Let us therefore rob Him of nothing. We cannot every Moment do great Matters for Him, but we may always do what is proper for our Condition. To be silent, to suffer, to pray, when there is no Room for outward Action, is an acceptable Offering to GOD. A Disappointment, a Contradiction, an Injury received and endured for GOD's Sake, is of as much Value as a long Prayer; and the Time is not lost which is spent in the Practice of Meekness and Patience. But we must be cautious that those Interruptions do not happen by our own Fault. Thus we should regulate our Life, and *redeem the Time*, as St. Paul speaks, flying from the World, its vain Amusements, useless Correspondencies, and unprofitable Conversations, which serve only to dissipate our Minds, and indulge our Self-Love. By these Means we shall find Time for the Service of GOD; all that is spent otherwise, is lost.



#### XIV.

*Of the Love we ought to have for GOD.*

**W**HOM have I in Heaven but Thee? And there is none upon Earth that I desire besides Thee, Ps. lxxiii. 25. When we say to GOD,

that we love Him with all our Heart, it is often a meer Form of Words, without Truth or Meaning. Men learn it when they are young, and thy continue to use it when they are grown up, without thinking of what they say. To love God, is to have no other Will but His; to keep faithfully his Law, and have in Abhorrence all Violation of it. To love God, is to love what *Christ* loved, Poverty, Humiliations, and Sufferings; it is also to hate what He hated, the World and its Vanities: Can we be said to love an Object which we do not desire to resemble? To love God, is to desire to converse with Him, to wish to go to Him, to sigh and languish after Him. That is but feigned Love which does not desire to see the Beloved.

H. OUR LORD came to bring Fire upon the Earth, Luke xii. 49. and desired that Fire might overspread it: Yet Men live in a deadly Coldness and Indifference: They love Money, Buildings, Titles, and a Chimera they call Reputation; they love even the meanest and most contemptible Things; but Divine Love rarely finds a Place in their Hearts. Do Thou, O LORD, vindicate thy Right in us, and reign over us, notwithstanding our Infidelities: Let the Fire of thy Love extinguish all other Fire: What can we see lovely out of Thee, which is not to be found in its full Perfection in Thee, O Thou Fountain of all Good! Grant us but the Grace to love Thee, and we shall then love Thee only, Thee eternally.





## XV.

## On the Words,

*LORD, teach us to pray, Luke xi. 1.*

**O** LORD, I know not what I should ask of Thee: Thou only knowest what I want; and Thou lovest me better than I can love myself. O LORD, give to me, thy Child, what is proper, whatever it may be: I dare not ask either Crosses or Comforts: I only present myself before Thee: I open my Heart to Thee: Behold my Wants, which I am ignorant of; but do Thou behold, and do according to thy Mercy. Smite or heal; depress me, or raise me up: I adore all thy Purposes, without knowing them: I am silent, I offer myself in Sacrifice: I abandon myself to Thee: No more any Desire, but to accomplish thy Will: Teach me to pray: Pray Thou Thyself in me.

## XVI.

*Of the good Use of Crosses.*

**W**E find it difficult to convince ourselves of the Goodness of God in afflicting those He loves. Why (it may be said) should He have Pleasure in our Sufferings? Cannot He render us Good

Good without afflicting us? Yes, certainly, God could do it, for Nothing is impossible to Him. He has an absolute Power over the Heart of Man, and moves all the Springs of it at Pleasure. But tho' He can save us without Sufferings, yet He will not; in the same Manner as He will not produce us in the State of perfect Manhood, but causes us to pass gradually thro' the Troubles and Weaknesses of Childhood and Youth. In these Cases He is absolute Master, and we have nothing to do but to submit, and silently adore his profound Wisdom, without comprehending the Reasons by which He acts. What we may discern plainly is, that we cannot become good, but in the Measure we become humble, disinterested, and free from Self-love, so as to ascribe all to God, without arrogating any Thing to ourselves.

Now the Operation of Grace, which destroys Self-love, is generally painful. He weans us from the Love of the World, by the Inconstancy of Men, and the frequent Disappointments that attend the most prosperous Conditions: He weans us from the Love of ourselves, by a sad Experience of our Depravity and Corruption: By such a Series of Events He makes us die to Sin. We would gladly be consumed all at once, to escape the lingering Sufferings of a tedious Mortification: Self-love makes us murmur at the Length of our Sufferings; and that is the very Thing which God would destroy, for while it lasts, his Work cannot be perfected.

WHY then should we complain? Our Disease is the Love of the World, and ourselves. God prepares a Train of Events, which by little and little mortifies our Love of the World, and weans us from Self-love: The Operation indeed is painful,

ful, but our Depravity makes it necessary. *The Whole need no Physician*, but the diseas'd Part must suffer the Surgeon's Incision: He cuts only that He may come at the Bottom of the Sore: If He puts us to great Pain, it is only because our Malady is great: We suffer not from his Cruelty, but from his Care and Skill; for He would treat his own Son in the same Manner.

It is thus God treats us: He never puts us to Pain but unwillingly: He loves us with the Tenderness of a Father, and can take no Pleasure in our Misery; but He cuts to the Quick to cure the Ulcer of our Heart: His Goodness obliges Him to deprive us of what we love too much, what we love inordinately, and in such a Manner as to hinder our loving Him: And when God thus treats us, we grieve like Children who are deprived of something which they were pleasing themselves with, and with which they would have hurt themselves; they cry and take on with Passion against those who have saved them from Harm. So we are apt in our Folly to murmur against God; but He saves us in our Despite, and by correcting He amends us. When his Hand lies heaviest upon us, it is only to hinder the Evil we would do ourselves. The Things whose Loss we lament, would have made us lament eternally if we had not lost them: And God takes away what we doat upon, that He may have our whole Heart to Himself, and in due Time fill it with greater Felicity than our fondest Wishes could invent.

NOTHING happens in the World but by the Will of God: He made, and He governs all Things: He numbers the Hairs of our Head, the Leaves of each Tree, the Sands of the Sea Shore,  
and

and all the Drops which fill the Ocean : His Wisdom has measured and weighed every Atom of the Universe : He each Moment produces and renews the Breath of Life which animates us : He has numbered all our Days, and holds in his Hands the Keys of the Grave, to shut or open it.

WHAT seems of great Moment to us, is as nothing in the Sight of GOD : The Difference of a little longer, or a little shorter Life, disappears in the Presence of his Eternity : What matters it whether this frail Vessel, this Body of Clay, be broke and reduced to Dust a little sooner, or a little later ?

How short and fallacious are our Views of Things ? We are in a Consternation to see a Friend die in the Flower of his Age : What a lamentable Loss, we cry ! But to whom is this Loss ? What does the dying Man lose ? Some Years of Vanity, Delusion, and Danger of eternal Death. GOD delivers him from the Midst of Iniquity, from the Corruption of the World, and from his own Frailty. And what do his Friends lose ? They lose the Poison of a worldly Felicity, they lose a perpetual Intoxication, the Forgetfulness of GOD and themselves, in which they were plunged ; or to speak properly, they gain by this Affliction the Benefit of being set free from these Evils.

How apparent therefore is the Goodness of GOD ! how tender and merciful is He with Regard to our real Evils, at the very Time when we are most afflicted, and most tempted to complain of his Severity !

WHAT



WHAT Difference find we now, between two Persons who lived an hundred Years ago? The one (suppose) died twenty Years before the other, but in fine they both died: Their Separation, which at that Time seemed so long and grievous, does not appear so now to us, and was in Reality but a short Separation: What was parted, soon became united again, and no Trace was left of the Division that was made. Life passes on like a swift Current: The Past Time appears as a Dream: The Present escapes us every Moment: The Future will prove like the Present, it will soon become Past in the continual Flux of Time: Days, Months and Years press one another forward, like the Waves of a Torrent. Yet a few Moments, yet (I say) a little while, and all will be finished. Alas! that which now appears long and tedious to us, because it is mournful, will seem short when it is over.

IT is the Weakness of Self-love that makes us think our Misfortunes so tedious. The sick Man, who rests ill, thinks the Night of an immeasurable Length, yet that Night is as short as others. Our Cowardice exaggerates our Afflictions; they seem much greater than they are thro' our Want of Fortitude. The only Way to make them lighter, is a courageous Resignation. We shall indeed still suffer, but God will thereby purify us, and make us fit for Himself. Shall we chuse to pass our whole Life, even 'till the dreadful Moment of Death, in voluptuous Ease, in Splendor, in vain Joy, in the Triumphs of Pride, in the savoury Enjoyment of the World (that declared Enemy of *Jesus Christ*) and in an Aversion to Sufferings, which alone can sanctify us? The World will cast us off, will ungratefully forget us,

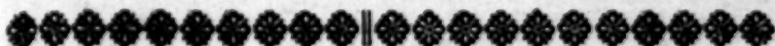
us, will despise us, will persecute us; it is very well: Nor should we wonder that the World acts like itself, always unjustly, deceitfully, and perfidiously: Yet this is that World which we have been fond of, which we perhaps still desire to love.

GOD forces us away from this hateful World, to free us from its detested Slavery, and make us enter into the Liberty of his Children: And for this we are in Distress! We must needs be very much our own Enemies, to be so uneasy at the World's neglecting us. What! cannot we bear a Thing so beneficial to us, and do we regret the Want of what is so mischievous? Such is the Source of our Tears and our Grief.

O GOD, who seest the Depth of our Misery, Thou alone canst heal us. Give us quickly, O LORD, that Faith, Hope, Love, and Christian Fortitude which we stand in so much Need of. Make us turn our Eyes incessantly unto Thee, O Almighty Father, (who givest nothing to thy dear Children, but to promote their Salvation) and to *Jesus* thy Son, who is our Pattern in Suffering. Thou didst fasten Him to the Cross for us: Thou madest Him a *Man of Sorrows*, to teach us how useful Sorrows are. Let coward Nature then be silent, in the Contemplation of *Jesus* filled with Reproaches, and crushed with Sufferings.

GIVE me, O LORD, a Heart according to Thine own; a Heart that may be hardened against itself, that may fear nothing but to displease Thee, or may at least fear eternal Pains, and not those which prepare us for thy Kingdom. Thou seest

seest, O LORD, the Weakness and Distress of thy poor Creature : He is helpless, and can find no Support in Himself. So much the better provided, that Thou wilt not fail him, and that he continues to seek from Thee, with an humble Confidence, what he despairs to find in his own Heart.



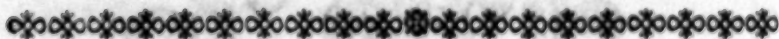


A

# Mother's A D V I C E

To her D A U G H T E R.

*Translated from the FRENCH.*



## S E C T. I.

**A**S you are now, dear Daughter, of an Age capable to be instructed in the Obligations of Christianity, I have thought it my Duty no longer to delay the giving you some little Directions, which will make your Life happy, as well as religious, if you follow them.

THERE are, dear Child, many Kinds of Devotion, which are both burthensome and unprofitable too. As the Heathen had each an Idol according to his own Fancy, so now a-Days Men devise a Sort of Religion, each to his own Humour: Some make Religion consist only in repeating so many Prayers, Psalms, Chapters, &c. and provided they  
omit



omit nothing of the Task they have prescribed themselves, they think they have done their Duty, and that GOD must be satisfied with the Tribute of their Lips, though the World has full Possession of their Hearts. The Piety of others is to be always Abroad, about what they call Works of Charity; and of others, to pass great Part of their Lives at Church, neglecting their Families; to be busied in Matters, which, tho' good in themselves, are not so for *them*, but in such Degree only as they are consistent with the principal Duties incumbent on them, in that State of Life wherein GOD has placed them.

I HOPE that you will be secure from all these Errors, if you follow faithfully what the LORD enables me to say to you. And I trust in his Goodness, it may be a Means of obtaining for you such Grace, as may confirm and establish you in his Love.

As you consist of Soul and Body, both must be regulated. I begin with the nobler Part.

My Child, *you are the Temple of GOD*, if so be that GOD *dwells in you by Faith*. His Will is, that He may reign in you; and how can He reign there, if He does not dwell there?

Be very careful therefore not to prophane his Temple. Do not force Him to withdraw Himself, by committing any wilful Sin; and if such a Misfortune should happen, delay not one Moment to return to Him, and to invite Him, in the Bitterness of your Soul, to enter again into his Habitation. If you let Him be long absent, it is much to be feared, He may not return: There is indeed no Danger on his Part, for He always desires to return into the Heart of Man; but Man, when gone astray,

astray, and at a Distance from GOD, hardens his Heart, and that more and more, the longer he is absent. Let not a vain Fear (which ignorant Persons call Humility) hinder your returning to GOD, as soon as you are fallen from Him. This is of the last Consequence, and without it, it is not possible to lead a Christian Life.

BUT as it is far better not to commit Offences, than to repent of them: I must give you a Preservative to secure you from them.

THE Rule which GOD gave to *Abraham*, was, *Walk before Me*, (or in my Presence) *and be thou perfect*, Gen. xvii. 1. And *David* saith, *Psalms* xvi. 8. *I have set GOD always before me—therefore I shall not fall*. You see then, that the Way to exercise your Faith, is, *to walk in his Presence*: This is indispensably necessary.



## S E C T. II.

THERE are two Ways of maintaining a Sense of this Divine Presence. The first, is Prayer. The second, doing the Will of GOD in your daily Business.

As for your Prayer, you see plainly, that you must address yourself inwardly to Him, who dwells within you; and that it would be an useless Trouble to seek Him, as afar off, whom you have so very near you. It may be a Satisfaction to you to hear what *St. Augustine* saith upon this Subject. He thus laments his having sought GOD out of himself:

himself: (*Confess. Book X. Chap. VI. and XXVII.*)  
 "I sought Thee, O my God, (saith he) in Hea-  
 "ven, in Earth, and in the Creatures, and I found  
 "Thee not there: I sought Thee afar off, and  
 "Thou wert very near. As soon as I sought Thee  
 "in my Heart, I found Thee there."

PRAY to Him with Faith, Confidence, and Love, and ever from the Heart. Let Love more than Books instruct your Devotion. Ask what you want, with Confidence in his Goodness: Think often what *Christ* has suffered for you; but above all, beseech Him to be your Master, and to teach you Himself to pray. Say often to Him, "LORD, I am but a Child, I know not what to say." Receive with a full Conviction what *St. Paul* affirms, *Rom. viii. 26. We know not what we should pray for, as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh Intercession for us, with Groanings which cannot be uttered.* Beseech then the Holy Spirit to ask for you the Power to do what He requires of you.

YOU may sometimes consider GOD as your Master, and keep close to Him as a Scholar, who desires only to be instructed; saying to Him, from the Bottom of your Heart, *Teach me, O Divine Master, to do thy Will, and to please Thee:* And then continuing in Silence, as to hear Him say with *Samuel, Speak, LORD, for thy Servant heareth.* And with *David, Teach me thy Statutes. I will hear what the LORD GOD will speak, Ps. lxxxv. 8.*

THINK then that He saith to you, as in *Psalms* xlv. 10, 11. *Hearken, O Daughter, and consider, incline thine Ear; forget also thine own People, and thy Father's House (i. e. the World): So shall the King have Pleasure in thy Beauty, for He is the LORD thy GOD, and worship thou Him.*

SOMETIMES you may behold GOD as a King, and beseech Him, that his Kingdom may come, and that He may reign within you. Present your Heart to Him, that He may take Possession of it; and make Himself obey'd there, with an absolute Authority. Say unto Him, "O my GOD, subdue this rebellious Heart to perfect Subjection." He saith to you, *Behold thy King cometh full of Meekness*, Matt. xxi. 5. Bid your Heart then *Open*, that the King of Glory may come in. After which, make a thorough Resignation of yourself to this Divine King: Continue in his Presence with Reverence, ready to receive his Orders, as He shall please to give them.

AT other Times you may behold Him as your Father, and be filled with grateful Acknowledgments of his Goodness in taking you for his Child. For if this Quality of Father engages Him to enrich you with his Graces, and makes you Inheritor of his Kingdom; it obliges you at the same Time to love Him above all Things, and to endeavour to please Him in all you do: And this should engage you to speak to Him often with Freedom, and Confidence in his Goodness. A Child is familiar with his Father, who is pleased with the Expressions of its Love, excuses its Weaknesses, and easily forgives them. *O the best of Fathers, keep me as a little Child*; so you should say to Him: Then continue in Peace, as in the Arms of your Father; without any other Care, than to do his Will:

SAY to Him often, *My Father! My Father!*—*Ye have received* (saith St. Paul) *the Spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father; the Spirit itself bearing Witness with our Spirit, that we are the Children of GOD*, Rom. viii. 15, 16. And again, *Because ye are Sons, GOD hath sent forth the Spirit*  
of



of his Son into your Hearts, crying *Abba, Father*, Gal. iv. 6. This Word *Crying*, well expresses a Child's Manner of speaking to a Father, whom he loves: Love makes him rather cry, than say, *My Father! My Father!* And as a little Child, who in its Fondness cries only *Father*, insinuates a thousand nameless Things to a Father's Heart: So when by the Spirit of Adoption, we cry only this Word, God hears and accepts our Addresses to Him. The Term *Crying*, shews plainly, that God is not satisfied with an unmeaning lifeless Word, which the Tongue pronounces out of Custom, but in which the Heart has no Share: It must be a Cry from the Bottom of the Heart, to recognize so gracious a Father.

SOMETIMES present yourself to *Jesus Christ* as one sick, and all over wounded by Sin. Behold Him as an affectionate Physician, who comes to cure you; nay more, to take your Diseases upon Himself: *The Chastisement of our Peace is upon Him, and by his Stripes we are healed.* Fear not then to draw near to Him, however full of Sores you may be; and say to Him, with the Leper, *LORD, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean*: Then continue in Silence, exposed before Him, as an Object of his Compassion. The diseased Wretch, who with few Words, only shews his Maladies, moves Pity much more, than he who exaggerates them with an affected Eloquence. It is sufficient to dwell upon such a Thought as this, *Heal me, O LORD, lest my Wounds be corrupted: Speak but one Word, and thy Servant shall be whole.*

ALWAYS behold Him as your Saviour and Redeemer, who redeems you from the Guilt and Slavery, in which you had wilfully engaged yourself. Say with *David*, *Else the LORD, O my Soul, who forgiveth*

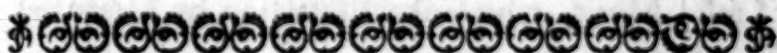
*forgiveth all thine Iniquities, who healeth all thy Diseases, who redeemeth thy Life from Destruction,* Psalm ciii. 2, 3, 4. But with what a Price hath He redeemed you? Even with all his Blood, his Life, in a Word, with his whole Self. He became a Slave, to make you free; and He asks nothing more of you, but your hearty Consent to be delivered from your Captivity. There is no Deliverance for you, but by Him; and you will be your own Enemy, if you hinder Him. He saith Himself, *If the Son make you free, you shall be free indeed,* John viii. 36. You belong to Him by the Title of Acquisition, you are his Dominion, and his Inheritance.

As his Blood is the Price of your Redemption, beseech Him to wash you in it. Keep yourself close to Him, as it were to receive the Blood that flows from his Wounds. Say to Him, LORD, *I am oppressed, undertake for me,* Isaiah xxxviii. 14. Then, after acknowledging his Goodness, with the tenderest Sentiments of Love and Gratitude, keep yourself in Silence by Him, while He pleads for you by all the Merits of his Sufferings.

You must endeavour to continue in a Spirit of Prayer all the Day long, by fervent Ejaculations suitable to the Subject of your Morning's Meditations; sometimes invoking GOD, as your Master, King, Father, &c. agreeable to the Directions here given.

THE other Way I recommended to you of maintaining a Sense of the Divine Presence, was the doing the Will of GOD in your daily Business. Now the Will of GOD is continually revealed to you in the daily Dispensations of Providence; and our Business is faithfully to follow it from Moment to

to Moment, chearfully accepting all that befalls us, (sweet or bitter, pleasing or vexatious) whether from the Hand of GOD by Afflictions, or from Men by ill Usage, or from ourselves by Imprudence and Mistakes; and in doing thus, we cannot be deceived; for it is most certain, that whatever happens to us (excepting only Sin) is the Will of GOD.



### S E C T. III.

*How to pass the Day religiously.*

**A**RISE, and go to Bed, at a certain Hour; for where there is no fixed Rule, Disorders will soon ensue. You should not lie late in the Morning, nor set up later than Ten at Night.

As soon as you awake, present your first Thoughts to the LORD, and offer Him the first Fruits of the Day.

As soon as you arise, fail not to fall on your Knees before GOD, it is an Homage due to his supreme Majesty.

As soon as you are drest, spend half an Hour in Devotion. There unite yourself to the Sacrifice, which *Christ* made of Himself to the Eternal Father, and offer yourself to Him, that He may do with you, and in you, what He pleases. Let your principal Exercise be an absolute Submission to the whole

whole Will of God; be subject, be entirely subject to it. To serve Him is to reign.

BE not long a dressing. Remember Time is a precious Talent, that must be accounted for. Be not affected or expensive in your Cloaths; and on the other Hand, be not dirty. Be dressed clean, so as to give no Offence. Let your Virtue, Candour, and Discretion, make you distinguished, and not what you wear. They must be very destitute of solid Merit, who seek Distinction by Dress and Equipage.

NEVER pass the Morning without reading some spiritual Book, such as *Thomas à Kempis*, *John Arndt*, or the like. Read little, but with Relish and Application. Read slowly, that you may profit by it: And when you come from Devotion, be careful not to dissipate your Thoughts, but preserve what you have received thereby, as a precious Liquor, which you fear will be evaporated. The Fire kindles in Prayer; but it soon goes out, if it be not kept up the rest of the Day. The Fuel you must feed it with, is frequent Recollection, and Acts of Love, Thanksgiving, and Oblation of yourself to God; and (as it were) sinking inwards, to find Him there, who is the Center of your Soul.

BUT above all other Books, my Advice is, that you read the Holy Scripture, which will shew you particularly, what Christianity engages you to. Read it often: Make it your principal Study: Let it be your daily Bread. You will learn there, from *Christ* Himself, what you must do, not to offend Him. You will see there, what He has done and suffered for you. Your Religion is there in its Purity. You will be there encouraged by the Ex-  
amples

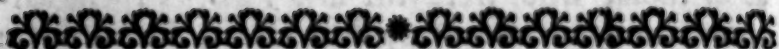


amples of the Patriarchs of the Old Law, as well as of those, who were the first Pillars of Christianity; and therefore (my dear Child) I advise you not to pass one Day, without reading a certain Portion of it. Sometimes you may read where the Book opens, but let your general Method be, to read it in Order, beginning where you left off last, that you may better understand its Beauties, and relish its Sweetnesses. Read with Humility, not to appear knowing, but to edify and nourish your Soul; that you may be fully instructed in your Duty, and what the Covenant which God has made with you, obliges you to.

You may pass your Afternoon at Work, and in visiting your Friends: But never spend an Afternoon without reserving some Part of it for Recollection and Prayer.

AT Night, examine yourself, and make an Act of Contrition: Then continue with Tranquility in the Presence of GOD 'till you drop asleep. This will make you rest well. Rise again in the same Dispositions, and persevere in this inward Peace of GOD, *which passeth all Understanding.*

It must be a general Rule with you, to endeavour to suppress all vain and useless Thoughts, and stop the working of your Head, to preserve that of your Heart. When many Reflections crowd upon your Mind, give them no Entertainment, but let them drop, that you may open your Heart to GOD. Continue the Day as you began it, that so from Time to Time you may repose in GOD.



## S E C T. IV.

*Concerning Mortification.*

**E**VERY Day deny yourself some Satisfaction, like *Paul*, who was *always bearing about in his Body the dying of the LORD JESUS*, 2 Cor. iv. 10.

As for the Eyes, which are a Source of numberless Sins, we may mortify these by shutting our Eyes against all outward Objects, that we may gather the Force of the Mind inward, and apply it to GOD. We should moreover mortify the Eyes, in refusing them all Objects of mere Curiosity. This Kind of Mortification is very profitable, and can by no Means prejudice the Health.

THE Tongue must be mortified, in refraining from saying any Thing that may feed Vanity, or vent Enmity: We must keep a continual Guard upon our Lips, that we may not say what tends to our own Commendation, or our Neighbour's Disparagement. The Taste too must be mortified, by refusing it what it most delights in, and using it to what it least cares for: This may be done so privately, that No-body may perceive it; and with such Discretion, that our Health be not impaired. The Hearing must be mortified, by rejecting all Flattery, and every Kind of Conversation that tends to corrupt the Heart; and it must be brought to delight itself in attending to the Word of GOD, and to the secret Whispers of his Spirit.

You

You must subdue and mortify your Body, by renouncing all Delicacy and luxurious Ease, and sometimes by breaking your Rest a little, to spend the Time in Devotion. But the true and principal Manner of chastizing the Body, which you may, and ought to do in all Times and Places, is to bear, for the Love of GOD, all the Inconveniences of Life which happen in the Order of his Providence; the Cold, the Heat, a bad Bed, a restless Night, ill Health, the Neglect of Persons we live with, the Unhandiness of Servants, the Ill-will of Men, their Scorn, and their Calumnies; in fine, our own Faults, and the Pain we find in conquering our vicious Inclinations.

THE most beneficial and difficult Humiliation is that which rises from our own Follies, Wretchedness, and Sins: But we must bear it patiently, and proceed herein, as if for the Love of GOD, we had the Care of some Person infected with the Leprosy, whose Sores we were to wash every Day, without being tired, or offended at his putrid Ulcers.

IT is necessary then, my dear Child, that your Prayer be ever accompanied with a true and solid Mortification. Let us not deceive ourselves, Prayer and Mortification are two Sisters, so essentially linked together, that when one diminishes, the other must decay with it. Oftentimes Dryness, or Want of Devotion in Prayer, is occasioned merely by Want of Mortification. GOD is jealous, and withdraws Himself, for the Punishment of our neglecting that Self-denial which He has commanded. Make then daily, as I have directed you, this double Sacrifice to GOD, in refusing what pleases you most, and in doing what is most repugnant to your natural Inclination. Do not flatter yourself in this Point: Be sincere with GOD, and perform

what you do for his Sake, as having no other View, but to please Him; for He regards the Intention, as much or more than the Action.

GIVE yourself to GOD with an Heart upright, sincere, and disengaged: Mortify and deny yourself continually. When you find your Inclinations tending towards the Creatures, and your Mind and Heart taken with them, you must return to GOD with an humble Confidence, dropping the worldly Thoughts, and enduring the Pain they give you; so as to continue in Tranquility before GOD. But avoid, as much as possible, the Occasions of Sin, and die to all the little Satisfactions and Desires of Talkativeness and Curiosity.

Do not make yourself uneasy for the Troubles, Temptations, and continual Vicissitudes, to which human Nature is subject, but bear them meekly, and accustom yourself to Peace and Tranquility of Spirit.

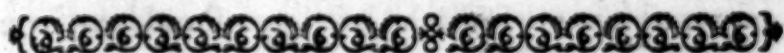
YOU ought to do every Thing in the Order of GOD, and for GOD's Sake; and to regard every Thing that happens, as the Appointment of GOD, as the Manifestation of his Will, which to fulfill in the present Moment, should be as the Food of your Soul. Mind not what others think to be better or more holy: The Order of GOD manifested in the Course of his Providence, must be the only Rule of your Conduct.

KEEP always an inward Solitude, without which the outward is unprofitable. By an inward Solitude, I mean, that you should shut out the Thoughts of the World and yourself, that your Mind may be vacant to GOD: But you should not disturb yourself



self for Things that come into your Mind against your Will.

ALL that we desire with Passion and Eagerness, is not of GOD. GOD dwells in Peace.



# S E C T. V.

## *Some Rules for Conversation.*

**Y**OUR Conversation should be mild, with good Breeding, and without Debate. Be never obstinate in an Argument, but give Way freely: Make no Person uneasy, and bear with the Faults of others.

**NEVER** talk of your Neighbour, but to his Advantage; and as much as you can, take the Part of the Absent, who is evil spoken of. Judge No-body, and be backward to believe ill Reports. Speak simply the Truth, without Exaggeration.

**LET** your Conversation be free and chearful, but without Vanity.

**AVOID** Flatterers, and those who commend you. Think them your true Friends, who tell you of your Faults; and be assured, that they who commend them, mean only to make a Jest of you.

**NEVER** make a Friendship with Persons that take too great Freedoms: Don't so much as keep them Company. Chuse for your Friends, Persons of Piety and good Sense: Give them full Liberty

to tell you of your Faults, and be pleased with them for so doing, without which (take what Pains you please besides) you will never be truly good.

NEVER break with your Friends, unless they prove vicious; in which Case, you should not have begun a Friendship.

NEVER suffer Men to take any Freedom with you, but carry yourself with Gravity towards them. Don't receive frequent Visits from any Man. Never give Room to suspect that you give any Preference in your Heart, which good Breeding obliges you to conceal: But being civil to all Men, be familiar with none. Never be alone with a Man, nor give any an Opportunity of saying what you ought not to hear. Guard well the Avenues of your Heart: If once the Bank be broke down, you cannot hinder an Inundation.

GIVE Alms according to your Substance. Visit the Sick. Be particularly careful of the Poor. Comfort the Afflicted, and afflict No-body. Let all your Works be done with Discretion and Charity.

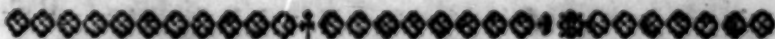
BE meek and peaceable: Have no odd Humours. Never blame without Reason, that when you have Reason, you may be more minded. Never reprove with Passion. Treat your Servants with great Firmness, and with Love, but with little Familiarity. When they are sick, don't put them out of your House, if you can help it; but if their Disease be such as makes a Removal necessary, sweeten it by kind Treatment, and plentiful Provision for them elsewhere. Remember that your own Servants have the first Title to your Charity.

HURT

**HURT** No-body, not even in Spirit; and speak not what you think may make any Body uneasy. Be ready to pardon Injuries, and give no one Occasion to practise that Virtue upon your Account. Never make a Jest of any Body, it is a notable grievous Sin.

IN fine, my Daughter, often implore the Assistance of GOD; and if you follow these Directions, you will be happy in this World, and in the next.

*End of the DEVOTIONAL TRACTS.*



Never shall a fall of my body, in a winter  
 When to the world, I have been known,  
 In many a prison house, and give repose,  
 And what you think me, and you think me,  
 Hunt? No more, but in the spirit, and the

you will be happy in this way, and in the next  
 instance, too; and I know that I shall be  
 in this, my Dearest, when I am the next

6 JY 64

00000000000000000000000000000000

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MA 271



AN  
EXTRACT  
FROM A  
PROSPECT  
OF  
Divine Providence.

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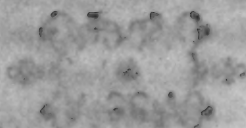
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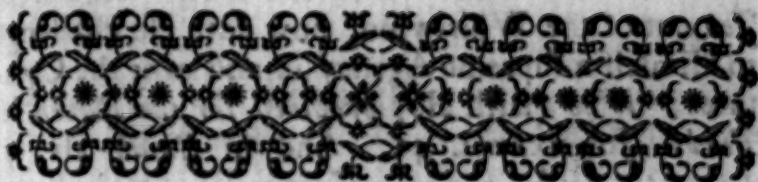
Divine Providence.

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A PRO



A  
P R O S P E C T  
O F  
Divine Providence.

\*\*\*\*\*

C H A P. I.

\* \* \* \* \* **T** H A T there is a PROVIDENCE appears,  
 \* \* \* \* \* 1. From positive Assertions in Scrip-  
 \* \* \* \* \* ture: *The LORD looketh from Heaven,*  
 \* \* \* \* \* *He beboldeth all the Sons of Men: From*  
*the Place of his Habitation, He looketh*  
*upon all the Inhabitants of the Earth; He fashioneth*  
*their Hearts alike; He considered all their Works,*  
*Psalm xxxiii. 13, 14, 15. The Eyes of the LORD*  
*are in every Place, beholding the Evil and the Good,*  
*Prov. xv. 3. Behold the Fowls of the Air, for they*  
*sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into Barns;*  
*yet your heavenly Father feedeth them: Are ye not bet-*  
*ter than they?*

2. FROM

2. FROM GOD's claiming the Work of Providence to Himself. When the LORD answereth *Job* out of the Whirlwind, how doth He challenge to Himself a supreme Agency in and over the Creatures? *Who* (saith He) *provided for the Raven his Food?* *Job xxxviii. 41.* And in *Isaiah xlv. 7.* *I form the Light, and create Darknes: I make Peace, and create Evil: I the LORD do all these Things.*

3. FROM Expostulations and Reproofs, grounded on the Consideration of Divine Providence. So *Psalms l. 21, 22.* *These Things hast thou done, and I kept Silence; thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thyself: But I will reprove thee, and set them in Order before thy Face. Now consider this, ye that forget GOD, lest I tear you in Pieces, and there be none to deliver.* So likewise in *Psalms xciv. 8, 9, 10.* *Understand, O ye brutish amongst the People: And ye Fools, when will ye be wise? He that planted the Ear, shall He not hear? He that formed the Eye, shall He not see? He that chastiseth the Heathen, shall He not correct? He that teacheth Man Knowledge, shall He not know?*

4. FROM Prayers made to GOD. The Scripture hath no Altar for an unknown GOD. We are not taught to pray to Fortune, to our own Wills, Saints, or Angels: None of these are the *Father which is in Heaven, whose is the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory.* The Prayers of Saints are Demonstrations that they acknowledged a Providence on Earth, who were ever looking up in Prayer to the GOD of Heaven. See *Ezra viii. 21, 22, 31.* *Neh. ii. 4.* with *Rom. i. 10.*

FOR further clearing up the Point, I shall, 1. Lay down other Arguments. 2. Reply to some Objections.

THESE



THESE Arguments may be drawn, *First*, from GOD Himself.

FOR, 1. The Titles given Him, are Implications of the Thing. He is JEHOVAH, who gives the Creatures their Being and Operation, *Acts* xvii. 28. He is *the Judge of all the Earth*, *Gen.* xviii. 25. He is *the King of all the Earth*, *Psalms* xlvii. 7. He is the First Cause; *I will bear the Heavens, and the Heavens shall bear the Earth, &c.* *Hos.* ii. 21. To deny then his Providence, is to take up the Bucklers against these no less glorious, than true Appellations of His.

BUT, 2. His Attributes of Power, Goodness, Wisdom, Justice, are so many Demonstrations of his Providence: For all these are not dormant; these are richly interwoven in the Works of Providence. The Scripture saith, *For this Purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my Power in thee*, *Rom.* ix. 17. *Thou art good, and Thou doest good*, *Psalms* cxix. 68. O LORD, *how manifold are thy Works! in Wisdom hast Thou made them all: The Earth is full of thy Riches*, *Psalms* civ. 24. GOD is *the Judge*; He putteth down one, and setteth up another, *Psalms* lxxv. 7.

LASTLY, GOD's Creation of the World doth infer his Providence: For,

1. HE is called *the faithful Creator*, *1 Pet.* iv. 19. The LORD leaves not the stately House of the World, after He hath erected it.

2. MOTIVES for Support and Consolation, are couched in GOD's Creation of the World; so that they who have an Interest in GOD, may hope for a Display of his Attributes in his Government of the

the World: So in *Isaiah* xl, 28, 29. *Hast thou not known, hast thou not heard, that the everlasting GOD, the Creator of the Earth, fainteth not, neither is He weary?*

3. THERE is an indissoluble Knot betwixt the LORD's creating and governing the World; for what is Providence, but a Kind of continued Creation? and therefore that Word is used to set forth Providence in Scripture: *Psalms* li. 10. and civ. 30. *Isaiah* xliii. 7. Again, to acknowledge GOD the Creator, and not the Governor, is to rob the LORD of his Glory; against which Robbery He vehemently protesteth, *Isaiah* xlii. 8.

LASTLY observe, in *Isaiah* xlv. the same GOD who made the Earth, and created Man upon it, raised up *Cyrus*, and prospered him. There is no Reason then to break the Band of Alliance betwixt Creation and Providence, which the LORD jointly appropriateth to Himself, *Jer.* xxvii. 5, 6.

Secondly, FROM Providence itself. There is an intrinsick Light in Providence, by which it is seen. *But ask now the Beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the Fowls of the Air, and they shall tell thee; or speak to the Earth, and it shall teach thee, and the Fishes of the Sea shall declare unto thee: Who knoweth not in all these, the Hand of the LORD hath wrought this?* *Job* xii. 7, 8, 9.

THERE are four Things observable; all of which confirm the Testimony of Providence.

THE First is, the admirable and wise Disposition of Things. The Creatures know their Ranks; so *Psalms* lxxiv. 16, 17. *The Day is Thine, the Night also is Thine; Thou hast prepared the Light and the Sun;*

*Sun; Thou hast set all the Borders of the Earth; Thou hast made Summer and Winter.* The Words not only declare an exact Order in Naturals; but likewise imply a rich Display of Wisdom, in the Vicissitudes and Successions of Distresses and Deliverances, which are wisely timed by the Providence of GOD for his People.

THE *Second* Thing particular in the Providence of GOD, is, the extraordinary Visibility of it in some Matters. Providence often mounts above the Reason of second Causes. Thus the *Centurion*, and they that were with him, watching *Jesus*, when they saw the Earthquake, and what was done, *feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of GOD*, Matt. xxvii. 54.

*Third*, THE wonderful Adequateness and Proportion of a Dispensation. An Instance for this is that in *Judges* i. 6, 7. *As I have done* (saith *Adonibezek*) *so GOD hath requited me.*

*Fourth*, THE Correspondency of a Dispensation with Divine Predictions. So the raising up of *Cyrus*, *Ezek.* i. 1, 2, 3, 4. compared with *Isaiah* xlv. 28. and xlv. 13. So the *Jews* under their Calamities might behold the convincing Hand of Providence; when their Language is, *Like as the LORD of Hosts thought to do unto us, according to our Ways, and according to our Doings; so hath He dealt with us*, *Zech.* i. 6. And not only the crushing Dispensations by the *Babylonian*, considered in Conjunction with the Threatnings of the Prophets, carry a convincing Light in them; but likewise those by the *Romans*, foretold by *Daniel*, and more nearly intimated by our Saviour, *Matt.* xxiv. 15, 16. *Luke* xxiii. 28, 29, 30.

*Third*, FROM the Absurdities of the contrary.  
 1. If there are evil Angels, and these so malicious and mischievous as the Word of GOD affirmeth; these would mar the Beauty of all, and turn all into Heaps of Confusion, were there not a curbing Providence, as is fully declared *Job* i. and ii. and *Matt.* viii. 31, 32. In both which Places Men may behold *Beelzebub* with his Companions in the Chains of Providence.

2. THE Checks of Conscience, and Fears on the Spirits of Men, would be but a false Fire, and groundless Fancy, if there were not a Providence; and this is contrary to that of the Apostle, in *Rom.* ii. 15. where he speaks of an accusing Conscience in the very Heathens, who stood in some Awe of a Deity, or a Providence controlling them, and punishing them for their Misdeeds.

3. A GAP to Atheism, and all Manner of Profaneness, would be opened by a Denial of GOD's Providence: If this Deep be broken up, no Wonder if a Deluge of Ungodliness follow. What the Apostle doth infer from the Denial of the Resurrection, will the first Use of such a wicked Doctrine, *1 Cor.* xv. 32. *Let us eat and drink, for Tomorrow we die:* But surely Humanity, much more Christianity, dictates otherwise.







## C H A P. II.

**T**HOUGH the Doctrine of Providence be written with a Sun-Beam, yet there are some Mists and Fogs, by Reason whereof, some are ready to question the Truth of it.

THE great and common Objection is, the seeming Confusion in the World by Reason of the Fury and Tyranny of some wicked Men, who prosper in their Attempts; and not only Heathens of the wild Common of the World, but others of the enclosed Garden of the LORD, have hereupon been staggered; as *Psalm lxxiii. 2, 3.*

I SHALL not largely reply to this Objection: But let it be considered,

1. **WHATEVER** there is of Disorder or Confusion, is not to be charged on the LORD, who is *not the Author of Confusion*, 1 Cor. xiv. 33.

2. **THERE** is a wise and righteous Method of God in all the Disorders and Confusions of Men. Providence is in the Head of the Creatures, observing a goodly Order, when the Creatures to our Apprehension keep neither Rank nor File. A serious Search then being made into the Disorders of Men, it will be so far from dismantling the Throne of Providence, that it will clear up the Eye of Faith, to behold the LORD sitting there, and sceptring it over the proudest and most outrageous Monarchs.

of the World. *I saw the LORD sitting upon a Throne, saith the Prophet, Isaiah vi. 1. and yet in the same Chapter we read, how Cities were to be wasted, without an Inhabitant, and the Houses without Men, and the Land to be utterly desolate, Verse 11. The same Prophet hath a Divine Treatise on this Subject, in the tenth Chapter, where indeed the Prophet plays the Casuist, and giveth Satisfaction to the Doubt.*

THERE are some other Objections, which the Weakness or Perverseness of Man doth start from Places of Scripture.

ONE Place of Scripture is, *Zech. i. 15. For I was but a little displeased, and they helped forward the Affliction.*

NOTHING else can rationally be inferred hence, but an Aggravation of the Fury and Cruelty of the Church's Enemies; they intended, hoped, and endeavoured, an utter Extirpation of the Church, when GOD intended a Purgation. This made GOD as angry with those He set on Work, as them against whom they were employed: So different is his Mind, and Man's, in inflicting the same Punishment.

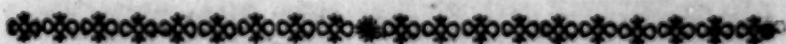
ANOTHER Objection may be from *2 Cor. iv. 4.* where *Satan* is called *the God of this World.*

HE, who is worshipped, obeyed, dreaded by some as a God, is still a limited Devil. He who hath Sinners at his Nod, is still at the Beck of the LORD. The common Hangman hath not the Power of Life and Death, because he is the Sheriff's Under-Officer. The Devil is an Executioner of Divine Wrath, but no absolute Lord. *Paul* never meant

meant otherwise; for he acknowledgeth the LORD as Supreme; who, though He permit *Satan* to work in the World, is still above him; yea, therefore above him, because He doth permit him.

LASTLY, that in 1 Cor. ix. 9. *Doth God take Care for Oxen?* may be objected.

THE Apostle doth not deny Providence with Respect to Oxen; (for that is plainly asserted in Scripture, *Exod.* ix. 3. *Psalms* viii. 7. *Psalms* civ. 14.) but his Purpose is to back the Doctrine of ministerial Maintenance from thence; and that, as typically held forth by the labouring Ox, who had the Privilege to be without a Muzzle; or rather by arguing *à fortiori*, thus: *Doth God take Care for Oxen?* He doth: And therefore, if the LORD would have Equity observed towards the labouring Beast, much more should they, who labour in the LORD, have double Honour. The LORD values a good Minister more than Oxen; though some Men, worse than Beasts, value their Oxen more than their Minister. The Place then being thus understood, is a Proof for the Doctrine of Providence: For the great LORD of the World hath an Eye, in his Providence, on the very dumb Beasts, who have God for their Speaker.



### CHAP. III.

PROVIDENCE, as upholding the Creatures, may be considered, 1. With Respect to their Beings, *Neh.* ix. 6. *Job* xxxiii. 4. *Psalms* civ. 30. *Acts* xvii. 28. — 2. With Respect to their

their Well-beings, *Psalms* cv. 37. *Psalms* cxliv. 12, 13, 14.

OPPOSITE to this Consideration of Providence, is Providence considered as deserting. As there is Providence upholding, so there is Providence withholding its Influence: *Thou* (saith the *Psalmist*) *hidest thy Face, they are troubled: Thou takest away their Breath, they die, and return to their Dust,* *Psalms* civ. 29.

DESERTING Providence respects, 1. The Being of Things, as such, *Psalms* xc. 5. *Jer.* lii. 13. *Dan.* v. 30, 31. — 2. The Well-being. *Egypt* is to be a Kingdom, but a base or low one, *Ezek.* xxix. 14. *Mephibosheth* a Man, but a maimed or lame one, *2 Sam.* iv. 4.

AGAIN, Providence as governing, may be considered, 1. By Way of Motion, Direction, and Ordination of the Motion to such Ends as GOD intends, *Acts* xvii. 28. *1 Kings* xi. 14. *Ezra* i. 1. *Gen.* i. 20. — 2. By Way of Inhibition, or checking the Creatures in their Operations. And this is, 1. Absolute, or eminently controlling them, *Exod.* xi. 7. *Exod.* xiv. 22. *2 Kings* xix. 32. *Dan.* iii. 29. and vi. 22, 23. *John* xix. 36. — 2. Comparative, or in Part, *2 Chron.* xii. 7, 8. *Rev.* ii. 10.

PROVIDENCE, in Regard of the Manner how it is conversant about its Objects, is variously distinguished. In the first Place, it is effective, or permissive.

THE former respecteth the Production or bringing forth of whatever hath a real or proper Being.



THE latter respects the Irregularity, or warping aside from the Rule of Righteousness; and this as inherent, or adherent to the Nature, Motions, Actions, of intelligent Natures, whether Angels or Men. This permissive Providence is not a moral Concession, or warranting what is done; but a not hindering, or not putting forth of a Force inhibitive or curbing.

AGAIN, Providence is, 1. Ordinary, which keeps the usual Order both in Naturals and Spirituals: See *Psalms* xix. 4, 5, 6. *Jer.* xxxi. 35, 36, 37. *Rom.* x. 17.

2. EXTRAORDINARY, which is opposite to the former, as *John* x. 12, 13. *2 Kings* xx. 9, 10, 11. *Acts* ix. 3, 4, 5.

I MIGHT distinguish Extraordinary Providence into that which is, 1. Properly miraculous. 2. Remarkably wondrous. I may set forth this by an Instance: For a Child to throw a strong Man to the Ground, and that by grappling with him Hand to Hand, may well be interpreted miraculous; there being no Proportion of Strength in the Child, to that of a mighty Man. And yet suppose the Man is sitting according to a tottering Posture in a Chair, so that his Body is in equal Poise, a small Push of a Child sends him headlong to the Ground. In like Manner Providence, by a wonderful Conjunction of weak Means in themselves, and by opportune Application of Means, brings forth a Work very glorious.

LASTLY, Providence is distinguished into immediate and mediate.

I. IMMEDIATE

1. IMMEDIATE excludes the Interposition of Means, Instruments which God useth at other Times; as when the LORD Himself preached to Adam, Gen. iii. 9. *Moses* lives, but not by the Use of the Creatures, *Exod. xxxiv. 28.*

2. MEDIATE, when the LORD useth Means, (1.) More common or general, as the Angels for their Ministry; the Heavens and the Earth, for Corn, Wine, and Oil. (2.) More particularly destined for such Ends, *Isaiah xxxviii, 21. Acts x. 5, 6.* the Angel will not there take away *Peter's* Work; he willeth *Cornelius* to send for *Simon Peter* (not *Simon* the Tanner) for his Teacher.

WE may farther consider Providence, in Regard of the End, Issues, and Events.

1. THE End of it is either ultimate, and that is the Glory of God; or intermediate, which is the Good of Creatures. So the Heavens and the Earth are Caterers for *Jezreel*, and that to the LORD's Glory, whose Bounty and Mercy are displayed in hearing the Heavens and the Earth for *Jezreel*, *Hos. ii. 21, 22.*

AGAIN, The Issues of Providence are sometimes by Way of furthering Things, so that the ordinary particular End is attained: So when God heareth the Heavens, the Heavens the Earth, the Earth the Corn, and the Wine and Oil, and they hear *Jezreel*, *Hos. ii. 21, 22.*

OR, *Secondly*, by Way of dashing Things, notwithstanding a Probability of such and such Ends, though not of such Ends as Providence intendeth.

THERE

THERE are other subordinate Considerations of it, yet reducible to some of the fore-mentioned Heads. What those other Considerations are, I may only point at.

PROVIDENCE then may be considered as direct and collateral. An Instance for the former, is the LORD's stirring up *Cyrus*, in order to the Delivery of his People, *Ezra* i. An Illustration of the latter, may be the *Philistines* invading the Land; which (at least in Regard of any such Thing intended by them) was a By-blow for *David's* Deliverance, *1 Sam. xxiii. 26, 27.*

AGAIN, Providence may be considered as more plain and obvious, so that he who runs may read; or more dark and intricate. Moreover, it may be considered as single, or in Part; and as copulative, as when the whole of a Business is laid together.

LASTLY, It may be considered, as concealing for a Time; or revealing, bringing Things to Light. These and the like Considerations being exemplified in the following Pages, I forbear Enlargement here.



#### C H A P. IV.

THE Extent of Providence appeareth divers Ways.

I. FROM exprefs Assertions in Scripture: So *Neh. ix. 6. Thou, even Thou, art LORD alone; Thou*

*Thou hast made the Heaven, the Heaven of Heavens with all their Hosts, the Earth and all Things therein, and Thou preservest them all, and the Host of Heaven worshipped Thee. In the Ark, GOD not only took Care of Noah in the Ark, but of the Creatures: It is an observable Expression which is in Gen. viii. 1. And GOD remembered Noah and every living Thing, and all the Cattle that was with him in the Ark. To this add, what the LORD Himself asserteth to this Purpose in the 38th, 39th, 40th, and 41st Chapters of Job.*

2. FROM GOD; without whose Will (the Will of Purpose, not of Precept) nothing comes to pass. *Are not two Sparrows (saith Christ) sold for a Farthing? And not one of them shall fall to the Ground without your Father, Matt. x. 29. Who is he that saith, and it cometh to pass, when the LORD commandeth it not? Lam. iii. 37.*

3. FROM the Creatures; which because they are Creatures, are dependent on the First Cause. *These (saith the Psalmist) wait all upon Thee, that Thou mayst give them their Meat in due Season, Psalm civ. 27.*

4. FROM the Connection of Providence with Creation. Providence (as was intimated before) is a Kind of continued Creation. GOD not only gives the Creatures their Beds to lie on, but (bear with the Phrase) makes their Beds. As Creation therefore is extensive to the Creatures without Exception, so likewise is the LORD's upholding and governing them to his own Glory.

VAIN then is the Conceit of those, who though they allow a Providence, yet contract it in Regard of the Object; as if Providence reached to some of the  
the



the more noble of the Creatures, and not to others. Whatever Philosophy dictates, true Divinity teacheth otherwise. *Whatsoever the LORD pleased, that did He in the Heaven, and in the Earth; in the Seas, and in all deep Places, Psalm cxxxv. 6.*

HERE is a large Field for Contemplation. Providence, which reacheth to all Things, and teacheth Man to eye GOD in every Thing. There are five particular Paths of Providence, which I shall point out.

1. THE Path which Providence makes through the Heads and Hearts of Men, in civil as well as sacred Things.

2. THE Way of Providence through the Mire of Mens Sins.

3. THE straight Road of Providence, notwithstanding the many Lanes, Windings, and Turnings of Contingencies.

4. THE fable Walk of Providence to *Golgotha*, or Place of Skulls.

5. THE Way of Providence in Matters of smaller Moment.

## S E C T. I.

THAT the Providence of GOD reacheth to the Wills of Men, is questioned by some; but truly asserted by others, and that according to Scripture:

FOR, 1. They who seem to be most arbitrary in the World, are yet in Subjection to Providence.  
The

The Great Ones of the World owe Homage to the Great LORD of the World; though they are Lords of Men, yet not of Providence. *Solomon*, who saith of a King, *He doth whatsoever pleaseth him*, Ecclef. viii. 3. saith also, *The King's Heart is in the Hand of the LORD, as the Rivers of Water; He turneth it whithersoever He will*, Prov. xxi. 1.

2. THE Reason why Men take this or that Course, is in some Respect attributed to the Providence of GOD, as over-ruling. *Sampson* is for a *Timnah* Damsel; his Parents knew that *it was of the LORD, that he sought an Occasion against the Philistines*, Judges xiv. 4. *Saul went Home to Gilead, and there went with him a Body of Men whose Hearts GOD had touched*, 1 Sam. x. 26.

3. THE Prayers of Saints imply the Truth of this Assertion. GOD *Almighty give you Mercy before the Man, that he may send away your other Brother*, and Benjamin, saith *Jacob* to his Sons, who were now setting forward to *Egypt*, Gen. xliii. 14.

4. THERE are clear Instances of GOD's inclining and turning the Hearts of Men, contrary to their natural Biass, and probable Inducements, which sway them another Way. *Laban* lays not violent Hands on *Jacob*, though Covetousness and Fury might edge him on so to do, Gen. xxxi. 7, 29. *Esau* had an inveterate Hatred against *Jacob*; and howbeit he is kind and courteous, Gen. xxxiii. 4. The LORD gave the *Israelites* Favour in the Sight of the *Egyptians*, Exod. xii. 36.

5. THE Providence of GOD is conversant about the Senses of Men. *The hearing Ear and the seeing Eye, the LORD hath made even both of them*, Prov. xx. 12. Notable Instances there are of the marvellous

vellous Extent of Providence to the Eyes and Ears of Men: Witness the *Sodomites* Blindness, *Gen.* xix. 11. The *Syrians* were led by the Prophet to *Samaria*, *2 Kings* vi. 18. In like Sort the LORD is said to make the Host of the *Syrians* to hear a Noise of Chariots, and a Noise of Horses, even the Noise of a great Host, *2 Kings* vii. 6. Now Providence, which thus walketh in the Porch of Mens Senses, walks from thence into the Parlour of their Understandings, Wills, Affections. There is a natural Intercourse betwixt this lower and upper House of Man. Reason not only takes a true, but even a false Alarm of the Senses, as in the Place last mentioned: *The King of Israel* (said the *Syrians* one to another) *bath hired against us the Kings of the Hittites, and the Kings of the Egyptians, to come upon us: Wherefore they arose and fled*, *2 Kings* vii. 6, 7.

6. THE considerable Revolutions and Changes in the World, depend on Mens Hearts. What is stated and accorded at this Council-Board, hath a considerable Influx on the Affairs of Nations and Kingdoms. *Ahasuerus's* Heart is towards *Esther*, Chap. v. 2. and what a Change follows both in Court and Country? Let *Darius* be won to own *Daniel's* GOD, and what a Change is there in his Dominions?

LET us now observe the Consequences from the Doctrine of Providence, as respecting the Hearts of Men.

AND I. How absurd is the Conceit of those who would have Men exempted from the Influx of Providence? The Creatures of a lower Form are under the Law of Providence, and that too in Reference to Man, *Psalms* civ. 14. And are not Men much

better than they? *Matt. vi. 26.* There is little Reason then, to deny the Subjection of the greatest Men to the controlling Providence of GOD. *Daniel* preached no such Doctrine at Court; he asserts before *Belshazzar*, *The GOD in whose Hand thy Breath is, and whose are all thy Ways, hast thou not glorified,* *Dan. v. 23.*

2. THERE is Reason to eye GOD's Providence even then, when Mens Hearts are filled with Fury. True it is, GOD instilleth no Venom into their Hearts; but yet there is a wise and righteous Hand of Providence in this. Men would do well therefore, not only to look upward to GOD, but also inward on their Souls, and backward on their Lives; and may they not cry out then, "Men have done us Wrong, but GOD hath done us Right?" The Sons of *Belial* are injurious, but the Hand of Providence is righteous.

3. IT is a pious and prudent Course to begin with GOD, when we have to do with Men: So did *Esther*; she fasts, and her Maidens, and the *Jews* in *Shushan*, before she makes her Address to *Abasuerus*, *Esther iv. 16.* And surely there is Encouragement so to do; for the LORD can work more Ways than we can imagine, on the Hearts of Men: Sometimes He strikes out Sparks of Pity from flinty Hearts, *Psalms cvi. 46.* *He made them also to be pitied of all those that carried them Captives.* At other Times, He awes, startles, and brings to pass great Things by Fears, which take Hold on Mens Souls, *Josh. ii. 11. Acts xxii. 29.*

4. KNOW to whom the Tribute of Praise is due for what of Providence is displayed in the Conveyance of Mercies by a Touch from Heaven this and that



that Way, on the Hearts of Men on Earth. *David* hath a Song for GOD's delivering him out of the Hands of *Saul*, 2 *Sam.* xii. Now one Way of *David's* Delivery, was by an Access of Providence to *Saul's* Heart, 1 *Sam.* xxvi. 25. The same Man of GOD hath left Records of GOD's Providence in his Deliverance from *Achish*, who looked on *David* as a Mad-man, and so slighted him without making sure Work with him. *Austin* relates, how by the Loss of his Way, he found his Safety in escaping the bloody *Donatists*, who had Way-laid him.

S E C T. II.

THE Providence of GOD reacheth to the Sins of Men; yet so, that it cannot truly be impeached with Pollution. I shall lay down some Arguments in the general for proving this, and then add some proper Instructions from thence.

AND 1. The punishing of Sin with Sin, is ascribed to GOD, and owned by Him. Thus *Ezek.* xiv. 9. *And if the Prophet be deceived when he hath spoken a Thing, I the LORD have deceived that Prophet; and I will stretch out my Hand upon him, and will destroy him from my People Israel.* *Rom.* i. 24. *Wherefore GOD also gave them up to Uncleannefs, through the Lusts of their own Hearts, to dishonour their own Bodies between themselves.* 2 *Thef.* ii. 11. *And for this Cause He shall send them strong Delusions, that they should believe a Lye.*

2. The handing Good through the Sins of Men, is the Work of Providence. The Good handed, is, (1.) Spiritual: So the Death of *Christ*, with the inestimable Benefits flowing from thence, is set forward by the Sin of the *Jews*: Him being delivered

by the determinate Counsel and Foreknowledge of GOD, ye have taken, and by wicked Hands have crucified and slain, Acts ii. 23. — (2.) Temporal Good is brought about this Way: *Joseph* acknowledgeth so, Gen. xlv. 7, 8, 9. We read in 1 Sam. xxx. 13, 14, 15, how the barbarous Cruelty of an *Amalekite* towards his sick Servant, was an Introduction to the Recovery of Captives and Goods, which the Enemy had carried away from *Ziklag*. Thus the Protestants of *Beziers*, in *France*, were wonderfully preserved: A drunken Drummer going to his Quarters at Mid-night, rings out the Alarm-Bell of the Town, and at that very Instant the Enemies were at the Wall seeking to surprize it.

3. If GOD's Providence did not reach to Sinners, his Government would be little or no Government; for the greatest Part of Men in the World are such, in whose Hearts Sin hath had its Regency. This then were to contract the supreme Regency of *Christ*, who rules in the Midst of his Enemies, *Psalms* cx. 2.

### S E C T. III.

I SHALL premise a few Things, before I prove the Extent of Providence to Contingents. Contingent Things are such, as in themselves considered, may act or fall out this Way or that.

CONTINGENTS may be considered as single, or complicated; so that there is a Combination or Conjunction of them. An Example hereof is *Joseph's* Case: There was an Heap of Contingencies, if we consider, his Father's sending him to his Brethren, or not sending him; his Brethren's so acting as they did, or not acting; the *Ishmaelites* passing  
by

by at that Time, or not passing by; their buying him, or not buying him: Moreover it is said, *Joseph* was cast into the Pit, and the Pit was empty, there was no Water in it, *Gen.* xxxvii. 24. That there was a Pit there nigh at Hand; and that this Pit, which was receptive of Water, and probably destined for that End, was now without Water, is all contingent. Here we have a Chain of Contingencies, some Links whereof will contribute to the Proof of the Matter in Hand, in what now followeth, both by Way of Argument and Instruction.

*First* then, **THE** the Scripture plainly asserts the Extent of Providence to contingent Matters. *Solomon*, who had made a deep Search both into the Works of Creation and Providence, attesteth this: And that,

1. WITH Respect to voluntary Contingents. *Prov.* xvi. 1. *The Preparations of the Heart in Man, and the Answer of the Tongue, is from the LORD.* Men think to bring forth this and that Dish on the Table, and in this or that Order: But there is a wise controlling Providence; such and such Dishes come not on the Table, or not in that Order as was intended.

2. WITH Respect to Contingents natural or casual: In the same Chapter it is said, *The Lot is cast into the Lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD,* Verse 33. What is more contingent in itself, than a Lot? Yet here is the disposing Hand of Providence seen. Examples there are for this in *Achan*; the Tribe of *Judah* was taken, then the Family, and then the Person of the Family, *Josh.* vii. 16, 17. And so likewise in *Saul*, *1 Sam.* x. 21, 22. Thus we have the Testimony of *Solomon*;

*lomon*; and yet behold a greater than *Solomon* doth witness the same: For, what more contingent, than for a Sparrow to be taken, and yet saith *Christ*, *Are not two Sparrows sold for a Farthing? And one of them shall not fall to the Ground without your Father*, Matt. x. 29.

*Secondly*, If Contingents were without the Bridle of Providence, God would be a petty Lord, not an absolute and universal Governor: Yea, remove Contingents, and farewell to the Government of the World. Let these be dumb Cyphers in the Table of Providence, and the speaking Figures will become silent ones. To judge by Way of Proportion; let there be a Survey taken of the Providence of God in the Case of *Joseph*; set by the Contingencies, and what becomes of that Landskip of Providence? Certainly the Province of Contingents is of vast Extent; so much may be gathered from that Passage, whether of the wise Man, or the foolish Man, brought in by the wise Man, yet speaking Truth in Regard of the Extent of Contingencies, *Eccles. ix. 11. Time and Chance happeneth to all.*

*Thirdly*, MATTERS of considerable Consequence hang on this Nail of Contingency: As,

1. THE Prevention of great Dangers. *Joseph's* Life was in an ordinary Way (if not somewhat extraordinary) saved by the empty Pit, and the Merchants who trafficked with his Brethren. And so *Moses's* Life did hang on the Cord of Contingencies, *Exod. ii. 5, 6.*

2. AN Inlet to great Tumults and Combustions, is by Virtue of a Contingency. The Coal of an intestine



intestine War was blown by *Sheba*, who happened (as it is said) to be there, 2 *Sam.* xx. 1.

3. GREAT Advancements are brought about by Contingencies. The Butler opens his Mouth at Court for *Joseph*; he was before silent; Ingratitude had set a Padlock on his Lips, as himself acknowledgeth, *Gen.* xli. 9. *Esther* passes her Royal Palace thro' several Doors of Contingencies. *Mordecai* likewise finds Contingencies to be the Golden Stirrup to his Honours, *Esther* ii. 21, 22, 23. and vi. 1, 2, 3.

4. THE Invention of Arts, and Things of considerable Consequence, have drawn their first Breath by Contingency. The Invention of Guns, which some think to be hinted in that of *Rev.* ix. 17. was ushered into the World by a Spark of Fire falling into a Mortar of sulphureous Matter, which gave Occasion for an Essay what Powder would do in a more exact Engine. *Acosta* relates how the Golden Mines of the Mountains of *Potozi*, were found out by an *Indian* going to hunt; in Pursuit of the Beast, the *Indian* laboured to ascend a steep Place, and laid Hold on certain Plants, which yielding, he espied in the Hole, or Root, Metal; and so that Golden Mountain was discovered.

5. By contingent Dispensations the LORD afflicteth the Sons of Men as He pleaseth. The blustering Wind of Distress gets in at this Hole. *Jonah's* Wind, Whale, Gourd, Worm, were all Contingents. *Job* in like Sort drank deep of the LORD's bitter Cup; contingent Providence held forth the Cup to that Servant of the LORD. *Thou breakest* (saith the Psalmist) *the Ships of Tarshish with the East Wind*, Psalm xlviii. 7.

6. **NOTABLE** Exploits and Victories, are hereby brought about. That *Egyptian* (by whose Discoveries made, *David* became so victorious, 1 Sam. xxx.) might not have been so left by his Master, or else have had some killing Potion of Soldier-like Physick administered to him to put him out of Pain. It is observable, how in naval Fights, the Wind, which is a Contingent at such a Nick of Time, is of great Consequence. And not only at Sea, but at Land, doth Victory hang on Contingency. The Prophet *Isaiah* gives a Description of an happy Concurrency of Contingencies, in order to a triumphing Conquest; and all this with Subordination to Divine Providence. *And He will lift up an Ensign to the Nations from afar, and will hiss unto them from the End of the Earth; and behold, they shall come with Speed swiftly: None shall be weary, nor stumble amongst them; none shall slumber nor sleep; neither shall the Girdle of their Loins be loosed, nor the Latchet of their Shoes be broken,* *Isaiah* v. 26, 27.

Fourthly, IN the Glass of contingent Dispensations, may be seen the Attributes of GOD in a glorious Equipage: As,

1. **THE** Power of GOD, which is notably displayed in the Winds, Seas, &c. *Psalms* cxlvii. 18. *2 Chron.* xx. 37.

2. **THE** Mercy of GOD, as in the Preservation of *Joseph*, *Moses*, and *David*, with others.

3. **THE** Justice of GOD, as when the two Bears came out of the Wood, and devoured forty and two Children.

4. **THE**

4. THE Truth of GOD. *Samuel* anoints *Saul* Captain over the LORD's Inheritance, 1 *Sam.* x. 1. After this, the Lot findeth out *Saul*, though he hid himself amongst the Stuff, Verses 20, 21, 22. The Land of *Canaan* was divided by Lot; and the Division holdeth Correspondence with the Prophecy of *Jacob* before.

5. THE Wisdom of GOD. By unthought-of Contingencies Matters are brought to pass in GOD's Time. In *Joseph's* Case all the Contingents were the Bridge of Providence, for the Dreams to pass over into the Land of *Egypt* for their real Accomplishment.

HAVING thus given the Proof for the Extent of Providence to contingent Matters; there are these Instructions which are of Use.

1. THERE is no Reason to slight contingent Dispensations. The same Will of GOD is the Foundation of Contingents, which is of Necessaries, or Things which are not in themselves contingent. A Sparrow hath not the like Principle of Life as an Angel, or Man; and yet the Sparrow falls not to the Ground without the Will of the Father. Moreover, as hath been intimated, GOD doth notably display his Glory by a Concatenation of Contingents. Make not light then of the least Link of the Chain: Remember who couples all together, and how He useth it.

2. HERE is a Check for the proud and insulting Adversaries of the Church. How easily can GOD, by a contingent Dispensation, present them with such a snarled Knot as shall be too hard for mortal Fingers to untie? The proudest Child of *Haman* hath no Reason to boast of To-morrow; for To-morrow

morrow may bring forth the Death of the Plot, and the Burial. There are Contingencies, which to Man's Apprehension, at the first, seem no otherwise than so many loose Straws; but with these Straws, artificially twisted together by the Hand of Providence, a Rope is made, no less strong to bind, than Chains and Fetters of Iron.

3. THERE is great Encouragement to live in Dependence on God for Provision and Protection. Contingent Dispensations are often our Exchequer and Life-Guard. If one had asked an *Israelite* in the Wilderness, Where is your Food? He must have answered, Above in the Clouds; but on the Morrow it will be had from thence. Again, if it had been said, What if an Enemy shall fall on you? It might have been replied, Such a Blow happened to the *Egyptians*, as no need to fear them for one forty Years; and such Fears had fallen upon the Hearts of the *Canaanites*; so that there is little Ground to be dismayed. Thus, thro' Providence, the *Egyptians* Frenzy at the Red Sea, and the *Canaanites* Palsey, was the Means of the *Israelites* Safety.

4. TAKE Notice of Mercies conveyed on the Wings of contingent Dispensations. In this Treasure-House are Mercies of all Sorts. The Woman of *Samaria* happened to come in a good Time to *Jacob's Well*, where the Fountain of Life was open for her, *John* iv. 6, 7. *Ruth* goes a Gleaning, and lights on a Part of the Field belonging to *Boaz*, *Ruth* ii. 3. and from a Gleaner, becomes a Mistress in *Boaz's* Family; to whom she married, and at Marriage hath the Prayers of the good People in *Bethlehem*; which Prayers had a glorious Issue; no less than a Grandfather to a King is born, to the Joy of *Naomi*, *Boaz*, *Ruth*, and the rest of the People of *Bethlehem*.

SECT.



S E C T. IV.

THAT the Providence of GOD extended to the Deaths of Men, may be illustrated, 1. More generally. 2. Particularly.

IN the general, it appears from these Arguments.

1. GOD giveth Life; and no longer than He upholds Life, doth it last. *Thou (saith Moses) carriest them away as with a Flood*, Psalm xc. 5. The Jews went about to kill Paul, yet their Design was ineffectual: *Paul giveth the Reason, saying, Having obtained Help of GOD, I continue unto this Day*, Acts xxvi. 21, 22.

2. IF the Providence of GOD stoops to a Sparrow's falling on the Ground, why not to the Grave of a Man? And yet Sparrows are not long-liv'd Birds, as Naturalists observe: They are Birds of little Value too.

3. DEATH is an Evil in its Kind; and shall there be any Evil in the City, and the LORD hath not done it? Amos iii. 6.

4. ON the Death of some Persons, the Adversity of a whole Nation is ushered in: That is a significant Place of Scripture for this Purpose, *Lam. iv. 20. The Breath of our Nostrills, the Anointed of the LORD was taken in their Pits, of whom we said, Under his Shadow we shall live among the Heathen.* And thus briefly in the general.

IN

IN the next Place, more particularly consider the Extent of Providence, 1. To the Kinds of Death. 2. To the Timing of Death.

*First*, As for the Kinds of Death, they may be distinguished thus:

1. NATURAL; as being affixed to Nature since the Fall of our first Parents, *Gen. iii. 19.* By natural Death here, is understood the Dissolution of Man from Principles of Mortality within, though there should not be any Violence from without: Thus some, according to the providential Disposition of the Almighty, *come to the Grave in a full Age, like as a Shock of Corn cometh in his Season,* Job v. 26.

2. VIOLENT; when the Candle of Life burns not out, but is puffed out by the Breath of an Enemy, or the Mouth of the Magistrate. *Job's* Servants were slain by the *Chaldeans* and *Sabeans*, but not without the Providence of GOD, *Job i. 15, 17.* *Achan* is stoned to Death; and yet Glory is due to the LORD whom *Achan* had offended, *Josh. vii. 19, 25, 26.*

3. CASUAL; which though it may be violent, yet is here considered as not intended by Men, as Agents or Instruments. GOD's Providence reacheth to Chance-medly. The slaying of Man accidentally, is said to be GOD's *delivering a Man into the Hand of the Slayer*, *Exod. xxi. 13.* *Deut. xix. 5.*

*Secondly*, THE Timing of the Deaths of Men, hath Reference to the Providence of GOD: For, as *He sets Bounds to the Sea*, Job xxxviii. 8. and  
bath

*bath determined the Bounds of Mens Habitations, Acts xvii. 26. So He hath not left the Lives of Men boundless. The Truth of this will appear,*

1. FROM plain Places of Scripture, *Job vii. 1. Is there not an appointed Time to Man upon the Earth? Are not his Days like the Days of an Hireling? Job xiv. 5. Seeing his Days are determined, the Number of his Months are with Thee, Thou hast appointed his Bounds that he cannot pass. Eccles. iii. 1, 2. To every Thing there is a Season, and a Time to every Purpose under Heaven: A Time to be born, and a Time to die. According to Solomon, Time or Season for Things falls under the Providence of GOD; and particularly, Birth and Death, which we are to understand only according to the Event, what Things fall out after GOD's Appointment; not the Lawfulness or Unlawfulness of them, what Things should be by GOD's Commandment.*

2. FROM the Reason rendered in Scripture, why some are not sooner removed out of the World by the Hands of Violence, notwithstanding the utmost Probabilities. *John vii. 30. They sought to take Him; but no Man laid Hands on Him, because his Hour was not yet come. The same Reason is repeated John viii. 20. and Christ backs it, when He said to his Apprehenders, When I was daily with you in the Temple, ye stretched forth no Hands against Me; but this is your Hour, and Power of Darknes, Luke xxii. 53.*

3. FROM the Truth of GOD, in Timing the Deaths of Persons, according to particular Predictions. So in *Isaiah vii. 16. For before the Child shall know to refuse the Evil, and chuse the Good, the Land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her*  
 VOL. XXXVIII. L Kings.

*Kings.* Pekah the Son of Remaliah, was one of those Kings, and his Death is recorded, 2 *Kings* xv. 30. It is said of the *Affyrian*, *Isaiah* xxxvii. 7. *I will cause him to fall by the Sword in his own Land.* Here was a Prediction of Death, the Kind of it, and the Place where; and accordingly it was fulfilled, as it is recorded in the 37th and 38th Verses of the same Chapter.

4. FROM the peculiar Prerogative of GOD, as He is, (1) The GOD of Mercies, and so He hands Mercies to Men, 1. By their own Deaths, *they are taken away from the Evil to come.* GOD houseth them in Heaven before the black Storms fall on the Earth. 2. By the Deaths of others, who are Thorns in the Sides of his People: So in 2 *Kings* xiii. 22. *Hazael oppressed Israel;* in Verse 23. *The LORD was gracious to them, and had Compassion on them.* Now how the LORD shews himself thus gracious and compassionate, we have in Verse 24. *So Hazael the King of Syria died.* Thus the LORD is a GOD of Mercies, even in the Deaths of Men. — (2) As the GOD of Judgment; and so not only Wrath, but great Wrath, comes forth in Timing the Deaths of Persons. The glorious Terribleness of Justice is here seen; as, 1. When Providence suddenly snatcheth a Man from his fancied Paradise; *Thou Fool, this Night thy Soul shall be required of thee,* *Luke* xii. 20. Death, as Providence doth judiciously time it, hath a Sting in its Sting; so in that Monarch, who was slain in his Royal City by his own Sons, and while at his Devotions in the House of *Nisroch* his God, *Isaiah* xxxvii. 37, 38. — 2. When the Deaths of many Thousands are timed together: *The LORD is known by the Judgment which He executeth,* *Psalms* ix. 16. We read of Seventy Thousand Men who died of the Plague in three Days Time, 2 *Sam.* xxiv. 15.

And



And in 1 *Kings* xx. 29. the Children of *Israel* slew of the *Syrians* an Hundred Thousand Foot men in one Day. Now if there were not a Providence in the Timing the Deaths of Persons, the Glory of Divine Justice would have its Grave with the vast Multitudes who fall by Famine, Sword, or Pestilence; all which are the LORD's Arrows, as the Prophet *Gad* informeth *David*, 2 *Sam.* xxiv. 12, 13.

5. FROM the Success and Unsuccessfulness of Means used in order to the lengthning of Life. The Preservatives of Life are conservative of it no otherwise than as the LORD pleaseth. This may be evidenced in three Things.

1<sup>st</sup>. IN the Use of medicinal Means, which sometimes (very improbable to Reason) avail to the Recovery of Health, and that though the Person were mortally sick in the Judgment of the most accurate Physicians. There seemeth to be something of Providence by Way of Proportion to that Cure wrought on *Hezekiah* by the Lump of Figs, as *Isaiah* xxxviii. 21. I acknowledge that Cure extraordinary, and shall not dispute the Question, Whether the Lump of Figs might not have something of natural Tendency by Way of Cure? This is that I contend for, That Providence is very much seen, if not in elevating improbable Means, in order to a Cure; yet in bringing to Light such Means as are improbable to Man's Reason, though very proper for the Recovery of the Patient, who, like *Epaphroditus*, was sick, nigh unto Death; but GOD had Mercy on him, *Phil.* ii. 27. And as the LORD's Mercy and Providence are displayed in the raising of Persons from the Grave; so no less may the Hand of Providence be seen in rendering the Means used for Health successless. A College of Physicians

are Physicians of no Value, when the LORD, the great Physician, withdraws his Hand: Witness *Aſa*, who had his Physicians, but not his Cure, 2 Chron. xvi. 12, 13.

BUT 2dly, In the Matter of Diet; some Creatures have more of a reſtorative Virtue than others; and yet ſome are healthier, fairer, live longer with their Pulse, than others who eat their Portion of the King's Meat, *Dan. i. 12, 15*. Whence is this? The Word doth plainly ſhew, *Exod. xxiii. 25. He ſhall bleſs thy Bread, and thy Water; and I will take Sickneſs away from thee. And Matt. iv. 4. Man ſhall not live by Bread alone, but by every Word that proceedeth out of the Mouth of GOD.*

3dly, In the greateſt Caution or Circumſpection Men uſe to preſerve themſelves in Dangers. The King of *Iſrael* diſguiſeth himſelf, and hath his Armour; yet an Arrow finds its Paſſage between the Joints of his Harnes, 1 Kings xxii. 34. On the other Hand, *Jehoſaphat*, who was in the ſame Fight, and in greater Danger than King *Ahab*, is preſerved: *It came to paſs, when the Captains of the Chariots ſaw Jehoſaphat, (in his Royal Robes) that they ſaid, It is the King of Iſrael; therefore they compaſſed about him to fight: But Jehoſaphat cried out, and the LORD helped; and GOD moved them to depart from him, 2 Chron. xviii. 32.*

Laſtly, FROM the Abſurdity which would otherwiſe follow. For if the Timing of Mens Lives be not according to the Bounds which the LORD ſets, then to whom ſhall the Glory in Point of Preſervation be attributed? Shall Men think themſelves, or acknowledge Fortune, in Contradiſtinction to Providence? The Scripture otherwiſe teacheth, *Pſalm xxxi. 15. My Times are in thy Hand; deliver*

*deliver me from the Hand of mine Enemies. And Psalm lxxviii. 20. He that is our GOD, is the GOD of Salvation; and unto GOD the LORD belong the Issues from Death.*

Now from what has been said touching the Extent of Divine Providence to the Death of Persons, we may learn,

I. THERE is no Reason to give Way to anxious and disquieting Thoughts, from the Consideration of Difficulties, Dangers, Casualties, which may attend ourselves, or those related to us, in the Way in which GOD by his Providence engageth us according to his Word. There is an irregular Fear and Disquiet, which leaps from second Causes, into the Hearts of Men. Our Saviour intimates so much in *Matt. x. 28*. The Disease there, is Fears about the Body; and the Cure of this Disease, is the sweet and serious Meditation on Divine Providence. It is the best Cordial under all Fears and Disquiets of this Nature. An Husbandman and Seaman were communing together: The Husbandman asks the Seaman, Of what Profession his Father was? He replies, A Seaman, as he was, and so likewise his Grandfather. The Husbandman enquires, Where his Father died? Answer is made, At Sea, and so did his Grandfather too. Hereupon saith the Husbandman, Are you not afraid to go to Sea? The Seaman asks the Husbandman, Of what Profession was his Father; and after, his Grandfather? And it being answered, They were both Husbandmen; he further asked, Where they died? Answer is made, At Home in their Beds. And are not you (saith the Seaman) afraid to go to Bed? The Application of this Story is easy.

2. IT is Wisdom then for Persons to interest themselves in the GOD of Providence. *Happy is the People whose GOD is the LORD, Psalm cxliv. 15.* There are two great Encouragements to look after an Interest in GOD, as reconciled to the Soul through *Jesus Christ*.

(1) NONE go with so strong a Guard, as they who have *the LORD for their GOD*. *Christ* tells his Disciples, that *the very Hairs of their Head are all numbered*, Matt. x. 30.

(2) WHATEVER Distresses they meet with, suppose a violent Death, they have a Counter-poison against it: They may lose their Heads, but not an Hair; they are Gainers, when they seem to be Losers: There is enough by Death to make Amends for Death: *Blessed are they which die in the LORD*.

3. IT may quiet the Spirit, when GOD takes away by Death, Friends, Relations, Acquaintance: These die not at Hap-Hazard: The GOD of Wisdom placeth and displaceth Persons in the World, and all wisely and righteously. If Children are with us, like *Jonah's* Gourd, for a Night; and then a Worm eats them; there is no Reason to quarrel with the LORD, who hath Variety of wise Ends in the Gourd-Dispensation of this Nature: We have Reason to quarrel with our Quarrellings at the LORD's bereaving us of Relations. If one lend us an Hundred Pounds for some Years freely, and after calls for it; is there Ground for Sullenness, as if there had been no Courtesy at all for divers Years? How often do we forget ourselves, as Men, and much more as Christians, in Matters of this Nature? The Apostle *Paul* cautions against irregular Sorrow for the Death of Persons, *1 Theff. iv. 13.* And an excellent Copy is left for us to write by,  
when



when Death sets it cold Hand on any of our Friends,  
2 Sam. xii. 22, 23.

4. WHAT Ground is here for a mortified Frame of Spirit both to Things and Persons in the World? Our Days, and the Days of others, will have their Period. We and others are like Passengers in a Ship; who, whether they sit, walk on the Decks, or sleep in the Cabins, are in Motion towards the Haven. The World is rather an Inn, than a Dwelling-House: *One Generation passeth away, and another cometh*, Eccles. i. 4. It is Folly then for the Sons of Men to be Elbow-deep in the thick Clay of the World; as if they, and their Wealth, their Pomp and their Pleasures, were to abide here for ever. O that what the Apostle *Paul* adviseth, were engraven on the Heart with a Pen of Iron, and the Point of a Diamond! *But this I say, Brethren, The Time is short; it remaineth, that they that have Wives, be as though they had none; and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this World, as not abusing it: For the Fashion of this World passeth away*, 1 Cor. vii. 29, 30, 31.

## S E C T. V.

THAT the Providence of GOD extendeth to the meanest Creatures, and Things of less Moment in human Apprehension, appeareth from the following Arguments.

1. THE LORD made creeping Things, as well as Whales and Elephants. This is plain from the History of the Creation. Now, if the Creation be comprehensive of Things which move in a less Sphere

Sphere of Activity; why should these be looked on as below the *Providence* of GOD ordering them to his own Glory?

2. THESE are a Part of the Universe, and so fall under the *Providence* of GOD: The little Finger is not excluded from the Influence of the Soul, because it is not of equal Bigness with a Limb of the Body; and if it is so in Man, the little World, why should it not hold, by a Parity of Reason, in the greater World?

3. WE find how the LORD hath condescended to give Informations and Directions about meaner Matters: The Laws given to the *Jews* have Instances enough of this; and why should it be thought beneath *Providence* to govern in Matters of less Consequence, when Laws have been enacted referring to lesser Matters?

4. THE Scripture hath frequent Instances of GOD's *Providence* about the meanest and most inconsiderable Matters: If we cast an Eye at Sea, there we shall find, that the *Providence* of GOD not only respects the *Tarshish* Fleet of Ships, but also a single Ship, and the broken Pieces of that Ship, *Acts* xxvii. 22, 24. Not only a Shoal of Fish, *Luke* v. 9. but a single Fish, *Matt.* xvii. 27. And there may be seen the same GOD in his *Providence* on the Shore. GOD's *Providence* reacheth unto a Bird's Nest, *Psalms* civ. 17. and to Birds in the Nest, *Job* xxxix. 27. Whether the Provision for the young Ravens, spoken of in that Place of *Job*, be by Worms out of the Dung in and about their Nests, or by Flies crossing over the Heads of the young ones, which Flies are taken captive, and so serve for Food, I shall not dispute: It is enough to note, that they are cherish'd, and that both Ways,

as

as is observed by some: And not only are the Birds, but Trees, where they nest and sing; within the Verge of *Providence*: So the Fig-Tree which our Saviour cursed, *Matt. xxi. 19.* the Sycamore-Tree on which *Zacheus* climbed up to see *Christ*, *Luke xix. 4, 5.* the Fig-Tree under which *Christ* saw *Nathaniel*, *John i. 48.* All these were upon Supposition of Divine Knowledge, so under the secret Law of *Providence*, that they were not to be cut down, e're these Things were accomplished. Not only Trees, but Houses are subjected to the *Providence* of GOD: Thus the Winter-house and the Summer-house, the Palace and the College, are liable to *Providence*, *Amos iii. 15.* and *vi. 11.*

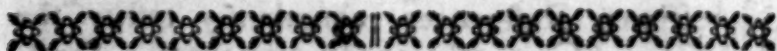
5. THE meanest Things considered in their Uses, Connections, References, abundantly testify the *Providence* of GOD as extending to them. *Sampson's* Feast, and Riddle propounded at the Feast, are Introductions to Matters of grand Importance, *Judges xiv.* The flying of an Arrow in Battle is a light Thing, yet this kills a King, and so the whole Army is routed, *1 Kings xxii.* In our *English* History, it is recorded of *Richard* the First, how a Castle was offered him, if he would save the Lives of the Besieged: He would not, but threatned to hang them: Hereupon one charged his Bow, and with a square Arrow (making first his Prayer to GOD, that He would direct that Shot, and deliver the Besieged from Oppression) struck the King, whereof he died. I might give other Instances. I have known the Life of a Child preserved by Means of a bending Stick, which hath checked a Board of Weight from so falling down directly, as otherwise the Child must have perished.

6. IF GOD's *Providence* should be denied in smaller Matters; then,

I. MIGHT

I. MIGHT it not as well be deny'd in greater Matters? For smaller Matters, considered in their Connexions, become great Matters. Who knows what are the Products of Things little heeded for the present Season.

BUT 2dly, To deny God's Providence in lesser Matters, is to break that Series or Chain whereby Divine Wisdom hath ordered all. As in the Workmanship of the Tabernacle, there were Loops and Taches, and these had their Use; and without these, what would become of the Tabernacle? So here, *Providence* takes in a Loop, a Tach, as well as the Purple, Blue, and Scarlet of greater Matters.



## C H A P. V.

HAVING thus far launched into the Sea of Providence, where the Christian may behold the wondrous Works of God; come we now to give a Recital of the sacred Maxims or Observations which this Voyage will afford: And here I shall,

- I. PREFIX the Observation.
2. AFFIX the Confirmation; together with the Improvement of it.

OBSER-



## OBSERVATION I.

*The Knowledge Men have of the Providence of GOD, is imperfect.*

THE Truth of this appears, (1) From positive Assertions in Scripture, *Eccles. iii. 11. He hath made every Thing beautiful in his Time: Also He hath set the World in their Hearts, so that no Man can find out the Work that GOD maketh from the Beginning to the End.* (2) From the LORD's posing Men about his Providence: When He takes the Matter in Hand, as in the Case of *Job*, how did the LORD argue him into a modest Silence? (3) From Mistakes about GOD's Providence; which have more or less seized on not only Men, but good Men: *Job's* Friends were no Atheists, but good Men; yet saith the LORD unto *Eliphaz the Temanite*, *My Wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two Friends; for ye have not spoken of Me the Thing that is right, as my Servant Job hath, Job xlii. 7.* (4) From the ingenuous Confessions of holy Men: *Lo, these are the Paths of his Ways; but how little a Portion is heard of Him! Job xxvi. 14. So foolish was I (saith the Psalmist) and ignorant; I was as a Beast before Thee, Ps. lxxiii. 22.*

THE Truth of this will further be evidenced, if we consider,

1. THE Object, viz. Providential Dispensations.

2. THE

2. THE Subject, Man under this or that Dispensation.

To begin with the first of these: The Scripture informs us, that the LORD *is wonderful in Counsel, and excellent in Working*, Isa. xxviii. 29. As what comes out of Heaven, speaks the Skill of the great Workman of Heaven and Earth; so there are some divine Pieces of Workmanship (if I may so speak) which hold Men at an astonishing Gaze. More particularly: Two Things in Divine Dispensations notably gravel the Sons of Men. (1) The Unusualness of a Dispensation. *Rebekah's* War in her Bowels makes her say, *If it be so, why am I thus?* Gen. xxv. 22. *Job's* Afflictions befalling one who keeps up Communion with GOD, must startle himself and his Friends; who probably observing how GOD did then ordinarily bless the Tabernacle of the Righteous, in Regard of outward Prosperity, were the sooner induced to pass a wrong Censure on that Man of GOD. The Intricacy of a Dispensation doth likewise contribute to the baffling one under the Dispensation. We read in *Ezek. i. 16.* of a *Wheel within a Wheel*: Whether that be to be understood of one Wheel within being out of Sight, and so there is a secret Winding of Matters which the Eye of Reason discerneth not: Or, whether in a transverse Sense; and so it notes the Cross-turnings of Things; when one while Matters go this Way, another while that Way. To this we may add some Examples of the Intricacy of Providence. That in *Judges xx.* where the Children of *Israel* had a good Cause and a divine Warrant to fight *Benjamin*; and yet they were put to the Rout. *Jacob* had a Warrant to return to his Country, a Promise that GOD would deal well with Him in that Return, *Gen. xxxii. 9.* and yet behold a Providence

vidence which seemingly clashed with the Promise! Is this (might *Jacob* say) to be dealt well with? What! to have thy Throat cut by *Esau's* Ruffians! Here is a returning to thy Kindred indeed, by returning to thy Dust! And yet *Jacob's* black Cloud blows over, and the Promise and the Providence sweetly kiss each other.

IN the next Place consider the Subject; and so Man is like *Seneca's Harpesten*, who complained the Room was dark, when she was blind. The Light of Providence is not seen; partly by Reason of Darkness in the Understanding; for, *we know but in Part*, 1 Cor. xiii. 9. and partly by Reason of turbulent Passions; which being crossed in this or that Dispensation, raise a Fog or Mist, and cloud the Understanding. How is *David* transported on the Death of *Abalom*! 2 Sam. xviii. 33. How doth *Jonah's* Pride and Passion hinder him from subscribing to the Wisdom and Mercy of God in sparing *Nineveh*! Men had Need therefore watch against Lusts and Passions, which otherwise will join their additional Issue with the intrinsick Darkness of the Understanding; and so, like the Earth, interpose between them and the Light of Providence.

THERE is therefore no Ground to throw by the Observation of the LORD's Dispensations, because our Knowledge of them is not a perfect Knowledge. It is a dangerous Inference from that of *Peter* speaking of *Paul's* Epistles, in which are some Things hard to be understood, 2 Pet. iii. 16. to reject therefore the Reading of the Sacred Scriptures. The like Inference from the Things hard to be understood in the Course of GOD's Providence, is of dangerous Consequence. What is said of the Scriptures, *It is a River wherein the*  
VOL. XXXVIII. M Ele-

*Elephant may swim, and yet the Lamb may wade,* may be said touching the LORD's providential Dispensations; some of which gravel the profoundest, others are understood by the meanest. Moreover, some Dispensations of Providence which are dark for a Time, may after become Light to the waiting Christian. *When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me; until I went into the Sanctuary of GOD: Then understood I their End,* Ps. lxxiii. 16, 17. Lastly, Such Mysteries of Providence as we are not able to fathom, yet by the Light of GOD's Word we are taught to subscribe to, and to rest contented, by Way of Admiration, where we cannot reach by Way of Comprehension; *Even so Father, for so it seemed good in thy Sight,* Matt. xi. 26.

AGAIN, there is no Reason for any Man to pride himself in his Attainments. Tho' a Man be got up on the Mountain of Providence, and others are in the Valley, yet that Man is far enough from touching the Sky. Two Things may check Pride upon the Account of Knowledge here: (1) The Angels in Heaven may learn by the Providences of GOD on Earth. That heavenly Academy admits of an Addition of experimental Knowledge; *Eph. iii. 10. 1 Pet. i. 12.* No Man therefore knows so much, but he may know more. But (2dly) he who hath an high Conceit of his Knowledge in Divine Dispensations, may quickly be mistaken, and pay dear for his Mistake. We find how a good Prophet, by a pretended Providence of an Angel's appearing, is prevailed on to do otherwise than he should have done, and that to the Loss of his Life, *1 Kings xiii. 18, 24.* Though a Man therefore have made more Progress in the Search of Word and Providence, than others, yet let him remember, his Knowledge



ledge is rather Twilight, than Noon-day; and let him, according to that in *Pf. ii. 11. Serve the LORD with Fear, and rejoice with Trembling.*

FROM this, learn to welcome all such Means, Helps, and Furtherances as GOD vouchsafeth for the better Understanding his Dispensations. The Cripple needs his Crutches, and has no Reason to throw them away 'till he can go without them.



## OBSERVATION II.

*The Administration of Things in the World, is according to the Draught of Divine Wisdom.*

**T**HAT there is an Intermixture of Wisdom in the Dispensations of the LORD, the *Psalmist* doth solemnly profess, saying, *O LORD, how manifold are thy Works! in Wisdom hast Thou made them all; the Earth is full of thy Riches, Pf. civ. 24.* This will more fully appear, if we consider three Things:

1. WHOSE Platform it is.
2. How it is described in Scripture.
3. WITH what it may be compared.

1. EVERY Thing, so far as it comes from GOD, hath an Excellency stamp't on it; and if a Beam of the Sun be glorious, what is the Sun itself? GOD being then wise, yea, only wise, his

Management of Matters in the World, hath an Harmony with his Wisdom.

2. OBSERVE how *Paul* describeth GOD's *Working of all Things*, Eph. i. 11. it is *after the Counsel of his own Will*. Counsel is the Result of Wisdom and Understanding; and when attributed to GOD, denotes his glorious Perfection in ordering all Things, according to that in *Job* xii. 16. *With Him is Wisdom and Strength, He hath Understanding.*

ANOTHER Thing in the Apostle's Description, is the Order or Disposition of the Words; it is not said, *He worketh all Things according to the Will of his Counsel*; as if the LORD did first consult, and so a Will followed, as in human Affairs; but, *He worketh all Things according to the Counsel of his Will*; to note that the LORD's Will is his Counsellor: That includes Wisdom, Holiness, Rectitude, and is the Rule of all Righteousness and Wisdom.

3. COMPARE the Wisdom of GOD with the wisest: Go to the Angels of Heaven, who are the wisest of Creatures: Yet what are Angels in Comparison of GOD! How quickly doth their Mountain of Wisdom vanish into a Mole-hill, their Wisdom into Folly, before the All-wise GOD! So it is said *Job* iv. 18. *And his Angels He charged with Folly.* Their Line cannot reach the Bottom of Divine Wisdom in the Mystery of Redemption; they are at a Gaze with the Plot of the manifold Wisdom of GOD, Eph. iii. 10.

CENSURE not then the All-wise GOD for Misgovernment of the World. He rules wisely, whatever Sense and Reason object. *Wisdom and Might*  
are

are his, Dan. ii. 20. Instead of shooting the Fool's Bolt, acknowledge thine own Folly. *Vain Man would be wise, though Man be born like a wild Ass's Colt*, Job xi. 12. Here is an Ass, a wild Ass, and the Colt of the wild Ass; all which may abase a Man, and give a Check to his controlling Thoughts of the LORD's Dispensations. *Luther* hath a very pertinent Passage on this Head: "I (saith he) have often essayed to prescribe Instructions to GOD, which He should follow in the Administration of the Church: O LORD, I said, I would have this so done, and in this Order, and with such Success. But GOD did the Contrary. Then I began to muse, Surely my Counsel makes for the sanctifying of thy Name, and the increasing of thy Kingdom: But GOD laughed at this Wisdom, and said, Go to, I know thee to be prudent and learned; but this is never my Manner, that either *Peter*, or *Doctor Martin*, or any other, should teach, govern, or lead Me. I am not a passive GOD, but active; who am wont to lead, rule, and fashion as I please."

Secondly, GIVE not Way to perplexing Thoughts about Futurities: There is One who will govern the World well, and knows what He hath to do, without calling you to the Council-Table of Heaven. *Let not your Hearts be troubled*, said *Christ* to the Disciples, *John* xiv. 1. When *Christ* the Pilot was about to leave their Ship in Regard of his bodily Presence, their Hearts, like the Sea, were ready to cast up Mire and Filth; *Christ* therefore seasonably says, *Let not your Hearts be troubled*; and withall bids them look to the calming Grace of Faith: *Ye believe* (saith He) *in GOD, believe also in Me*. The Way then to have more

Quiet, is to exercise more Faith, as respecting the LORD in his Dispensations.

*Thirdly, Go down to the Potter's House, Jer. xviii. 2, 3. And what may you learn there? Is not the Clay ductile and pliable to the Hand of the Potter? And should not a Christian labour more and more to have his Will moulded or fashioned to the Will of his Maker? Carry back (saith David to Zadock) the Ark of GOD into the City: If I shall find Favour in the Eyes of the LORD, He will bring me again, and shew me both it and his Habitation: But if He thus say, I have no Delight in thee; behold here am I, let Him do to me as seemeth good to Him, 2 Sam. xv. 25, 26.*

*Lastly, THE Way to have GOD to be gracious, is to exercise Grace with Respect to the LORD's Sovereignty to be displayed as He pleaseth. There is a Way of Order, tho' not of Merit; a Way of our Duty, tho' GOD doth sometimes exalt sovereign Mercy when Duty is neglected: The Israelites provoked GOD at the Sea, even at the Red-Sea; nevertheless He saved them for his Name's Sake, that He might make his mighty Power to be known, Ps. cvi. 7, 8. But tho' this be so, yet Men have no Ground to neglect their Duty. Job's Captivity is turned, and GOD exalteth Kindness to a Wonder; yet Job is reasoned first into an holy Silence and Sense of his Failings.*







### OBSERVATION III.

*There is a glorious Display of the Power of GOD in the Management of Matters in the World.*

**T**HE Power of GOD may be considered,

1. In Regard of GOD Himself.
2. In Regard of Human Power.
3. In Regard of the Manner of its being display'd.
4. In Regard of the various Objects about which it is conversant.

In the first Place, the Power of GOD may be viewed in Regard of GOD Himself; and that;

1. As a glorious Attribute of GOD. As GOD is Love, so He is Power infinite. *GOD hath spoken once, twice have I heard this, that Power belongeth to GOD, Ps. lxii. 11. Touching the Almighty, we cannot find Him out: He is excellent in Power and in Judgment, Job xxxvii. 23.*

2. As joined with Wisdom. According to this Consideration; GOD's Power is glorious in bringing Matters to pass. *He is mighty in Strength and Wisdom, Job xxxvi. 5. Wisdom and Might are His, Dan. ii. 20.* It is said, that in warlike Affairs, *Policy surpasseth Power*: What cannot then both

both infinite Power and Wisdom accomplish, tho' the Wisdom of Myriads of *Abitophels* assay the contrary !

*Secondly*, THE Power of GOD in Regard of Human Power, will appear the more transcendent, if it be considered,

1. THAT Human Power is borrowed from Him who is the blessed and only Potentate, the *King of Kings, and LORD of Lords*. *Nebuchadnezzar* was a great Monarch, he had Kings subordinate to him ; yet said *Daniel* to him, *The GOD of Heaven hath given thee a Kingdom, Power, and Strength, and Glory*. He was beholden to GOD, who placed the Crown upon his Head ; and not only the Power, but the Exercise of it also is borrowed. So *Christ* to *Pilate*, *Thou couldst have no Power over Me, except it were given thee from Above*. But,

2. THE Power of GOD is seen as glorious, if compared with Human Power ; in that the LORD can, and doth, when He pleaseth, dethrone the greatest Potentates of the World. How quickly is a *Nebuchadnezzar* hurried from the Palace to the Forest ! GOD is Judge, *He putteth down the one, and setteth up another*, *Psalms lxxv. 7*. And hence *Moses*, speaking of the two Kings, *Sihon* and *Og*, whom GOD had caused to fall before his People, *Deut. iii. 21*. annexeth a pertinent Description of the LORD's Power ; O LORD GOD, *Thou hast begun to shew thy Servant thy Greatness, and thy mighty Hand ; for what God is there in Heaven, or in Earth, that can do according to thy Works, and according to thy Might ? Ver. 24.*

*Thirdly,*

*Thirdly*, THE Power of GOD is to be considered in Regard of the Manner of its Display; and that three Ways :

1. IMMEDIATELY, or without Means : If there be wanting Means, yet there is never wanting Power to bring about Matters, where and when GOD pleaseth. He that made the World without a Tool, can act without an Instrument. If there be not an human Arm to crush *Laban*, yet there is not wanting an Hand from Heaven to restrain him : So he acknowledgeth, *It is in the Power of my Hand to do you Hurt ; but the GOD of your Father spake unto me Yesternight, saying, Take thou Heed that thou speak not to Jacob, either Good or Bad, Gen. xxxi. 29.*

2. MEDIATELY, by Means ; and these though weak and improbable. GOD checked the *Egyptian* Insolency by Frogs and Lice. The Blowing of the Trumpets of Rams-horns is as effectual to level the Walls of *Jericho*, as if a thousand Barrels of Gunpowder had been under them : *Gideon* with his three hundred Men, routeth the Army of the *Midianites*, as well as if his Army had consisted of three hundred thousand.

3. THE Power of GOD is displayed contrary to the Nature of Means : He made the fluid Waters to stand up as a solid Wall for his People to pass, *Exod. xiv. 22.* Fire shall flame, and not burn, *Dan. iii. 26.* Lions shall be hungry, and yet not devour *Daniel*, *Dan. vi. 22, 23.* An harsh and cruel Jailor to *Paul* and *Silas*, shall become all Kindness, *Acts xvi. 23, 24, 33.*

*Fourthly*, THE Power of GOD is to be observed in Regard of the Extent of it : *With GOD all Things*

*Things are possible*, Mark x. 27. And not only in general is the Power of GOD marvellous, but likewise more particularly, if we view it with Respect to, 1. Spirituals; and, 2. Temporals.

(1) THE former, the Apostle speaks of in 1 *Eph.* i. 19. — *the exceeding Greatness of his Power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty Power.* As the Power of GOD was richly displayed in making the Heavens and the Earth; so likewise is it in creating the new Heavens and new Earth, *Isa.* lxv. 17. Look we into the new World, and observe what a golden Thread of Power is drawn through these following Pearls.

1. CONVERSION, Regeneration, and Sanctification declare the Power of GOD. *Thy People shall be a willing People in the Day of thy Power, Psalm* cx. 3. That the Wolf dwells with the Lamb, and the Leopard lies down with the Kid, is from the Power of GOD.

2. THE Forgiving of Sin, and the Mortification of it more and more, likewise hold forth the Praises of GOD's Power. *Who is a God like unto Thee, that pardoneth Iniquity, and passeth by the Transgression of the Remnant of his Heritage? He retaineth not his Anger for ever, because He delighteth in Mercy: He will turn again, He will have Compassion upon us: He will subdue all our Iniquities; and Thou wilt cast all their Sins into the Depths of the Sea, Mic.* vii. 18, 19. *Sin shall not have Dominion over you; for ye are not under the Law, but under Grace, Rom.* vi. 14.

3. THE raising up Persons to a Sense of GOD's Love, especially after spiritual Languishing and Conflicts,



Conflicts, speaks the Power of GOD. *Create in me a clean Heart (saith David) and renew a right Spirit within me; restore unto me the Joy of thy Salvation, Psalm li. 10, 12. I create the Fruit of the Lips, Peace, Peace, Isa. lvii. 19.*

4. THE vigorous Support of Persons in the Exercise of Grace under Sufferings, doth proclaim the Power of GOD. *Be not thou (writes Paul to Timothy) ashamed of the Testimony of our LORD, nor of me his Prisoner; but be thou Partaker of the Afflictions of the Gospel, according to the Power of GOD, 2 Tim. i. 8.*

5. PERSEVERANCE in Grace, even unto Glory, doth exhibit a large Testimony of the Power of GOD; so 1 Pet. i. 5. *Who are kept by the Power of GOD, through Faith unto Salvation.*

(2) IN the next Place, the Power of GOD is seen in Temporals: We may behold the Power of GOD in the meanest or least of Creatures. Amongst other Things, observe the Sparklings of this Diamond in two Things.

1. IN Point of Provision for Men: How did GOD feed so many thousand, and for many Years, and in a Wilderness, of old! As the Power of GOD was then seen, so it is seen in a larger Wilderness, the whole World, in feeding the Sons of Men; and the same Power of GOD is seen as it respects Persons, or Families, in their particular Wilderness. But,

2. IN Point of Protection, notwithstanding Dangers. It would fill a Volume to rehearse the many remarkable Preservations which some have had,

had, whilst the LORD had wise Ends for their Existence in the World. It may suffice that *Christ* points out the Power of GOD in preserving, when He saith to his Disciples, *Behold I send you forth as Sheep in the Midst of Wolves*, Matt. x. 16. It is a Truth, GOD's Servants are immortal 'till their Work be done.

DISTRUST not then the Truth of GOD's Word, as if the LORD could not be as good as his Word for Defect of Power. It was *Zachariah's* Fault, that he looked too much to Second-causes, and did not consider, as he should, the Power of GOD, which had Nature (though decay'd) at his Beck. If therefore there be as great an Unlikelihood of Things spoken of in Scripture, as there was that *Zachariah* and *Elizabeth*, being old, should have a Son, yet give no Way to Unbelief, but take a View of Matters in Conjunction with the Power of GOD; and so indeed we are taught in Scripture, as in the Case of the *Jews*, who have lain in a forlorn Estate for so many Centuries, *Rom. xi. 23.* yet GOD is able to graff them in again. And so in any other difficult Case, let that be remembered, *Gen. xviii. 14.* *Is there any Thing too hard for the LORD?*





## OBSERVATION IV.

GOD never hath his Vacation-Time; though He may seem to do little or nothing sometimes in his Administration of the World.

**T**HAT Providence is not idle, tho' it seems to sit still, will be evidenced,

1. FROM positive Assertions in Scripture: So Prov. xv. 3. *The Eyes of the LORD are in every Place, beholding the Evil and the Good.* Eyes are attributed to GOD, to note not only his Inspection into the Affairs of the World, but his wise ordering of all Things, in all Places, and at all Times; for these Eyes are never shut; the LORD is not a sleepy Watchman: *Behold, He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep,* Psal. cxxi. 4. *My Father* (saith Christ to the Jews, who were stumbled at the Miracle wrought on the Sabbath-Day) *worketh hitherto, and I work,* John v. 17. The Sense is, 'Tho' GOD rested the seventh Day from his Work of Creation, yet He hath not been at Rest ever since; He perpetually worketh hitherto in his Providence; and yet none of you durst entitle Him a Violater of your Sabbath; and why then am I adjudged a Violater for doing my Father's Work? This I conceive, with others, to be the Intent of that Scripture; and it plainly giveth us to understand, that GOD's providential Care over the World is permanent: The LORD

withdraws not his Influence ; *He upholds all Things by the Word of his Power*, Heb. i. 3.

2. FROM Examples in Scripture : For if we cast an Eye on this or that special Draught of *Providence*, we may trace the Foot-steps of the Almighty even there, where we cannot see Him so visibly. The Draughts of *Providence* are of two Sorts :

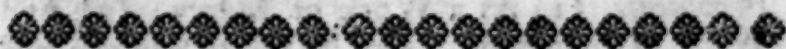
1. SOME respect Persons singly, as in *Joseph's* and *Job's* Case.

2. OTHERS respect the Body of a People, as the Church of GOD in *Egypt* and *Babylon*, and in Times of the New Testament under Persecution. Whoso shall take a right View of these Cases, will find them a clear Proof of the Truth asserted. He who diggeth the Foundation for an House, the deeper he digs, the less visible he is to those who cast an Eye towards the Place ; and while this Work is on Foot, is nothing done, because the Side-walls are not reared ? There is a manifold Working-hand of *Providence*. GOD doth ripen Persons for Mercies, and Mercies for Persons. There is not only a Work of the Shoe-maker, whereby a Shoe is made of this or that Proportion ; but there is a Work of the Physician, whereby the swollen, hydropical Foot is reduced to its regular Shape, and is fitted for the Shoe. If GOD, under some Dispensations, carry on a Work upon us, tho' He doth not this or that Work upon us, 'till He see fit, He is still at Work ; and the Work He intends is in its Second-Causes, and comes forth from between the Curtains of antecedent Preparations, when the LORD's Time is come. The *Israelites* are in *Egypt's* Furnace, whereby they must be melted ; and the hotter the Furnace is,



is, the nearer *Moses* is to extinguish the *Egyptian* Fires, tho' the *Israelites* know no such Matter.

AND we have not only Examples of Saints, but likewise of Sinners; and that singly considered, as well as in a Body or Community. Sinners ripen for Judgments, and Judgments ripen for Sinners: They, by their Sinning, are digging their own Graves: The Pit is a digging for them, tho' it be not finished. What a Quagmire then do they dance on! the Surface breaks, and what becomes of them, with their Projects and Designs? *Then she that is mine Enemy* (saith the Church) *shall see it, and Shame shall cover her. Mine Eyes shall behold her; now shall she be trodden down as the Mire of the Streets,* Mic. vii. 10.



## OBSERVATION V.

GOD doth some Thing, yea much, whilst He seems to do little or nothing; and doth little or nothing, whilst Men are in Expectation of great Matters.

THAT Providence speaks, whilst it is in some Sort silent; and works, whilst the Work seems at a Stand, may be thus evidenced:

I. FROM the secret and invisible Agency of Angels, about that Work which Providence brings on the Stage. The living Creatures are said to have the Hands of Man under their Wings, on  
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their four Sides, *Ezek. i. 8.* Hands are the Instruments for Action; and these are veiled with Wings: These Hands are at Work, though Men see them not. And thus the Angel informs *Daniel* how he had been at Work in the Court of *Persia*, tho' *Daniel* knew no such Matter, *Dan. x. 12, 13.*

2. FROM some under ground Foundation laid. There is a Seed sown, but it is yet under the Clods, Who of the *Israelites* thought, that when *Moses* was born, and preserved by *Pharaoh's* Daughter, a Rescue from *Egyptian* Insolency was remotely born with him, and bred up with him in *Pharaoh's* Court?

3. FROM Fore-runners of a Work, which hasten it more or less. Consider here a Work of Providence, (1) As a Work of Mercy; (2) As a Work of Judgment. As a Work of Mercy; and so Conviction of Sin, Humiliation, serious Supplication, have their Influences: The Work may in some Respect be said to be done, whilst these are doing. The Feeding the Horse, the Trimming the Ship, the Whetting the Scythe, contribute to the Journey, Voyage, and Mowing of the Grass. When the *Jews* consider their Ways, and hearken to the Prophet *Haggai*, the Work of Blessing them is at Hand, *Hag. ii. 19. From this Day I will bless you.* Again, as a Work of Justice; and so Irruptions of Sin, Insolency in Men's wicked Courses, taunting at *Zion's* Songs, Lethargical Security, horrid Blasphemy, set forward a Work of vindictive Justice, which though it seem to sleep, yet will awaken to the Terror of the Sons of *Belial*.

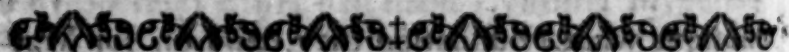
IN the next Place, GOD doth little or nothing whilst Men are in Expectation of great Matters: And this holds,

1. IN REGARD of the Kind of Things. The *Jews* had a Conceit of a temporal Monarchy; and hereupon *Jesus* the Son of *Mary* is rejected: And this Opinion had taken the Heads of the Disciples, *Acts* i. 6. they ask a Question there, which an Answer given to *Pilate* might well resolve, *John* xviii. 36. The Anabaptists of *Germany* said they had Converse with GOD; and a Command from Him, That, all wicked ones being slain, they should constitute a new World, in which only the Godly should live and bear the Sway. But what was the monstrous Birth of that Conceit, is not unknown to those who know any Thing in History. Men had Need then be very cautious what Foundation they build on for Matters expected; for they who look for I know not what to take Place in the World, will see it I know not when. And this leads to the next Particular,

2. IN REGARD of Time: The Thing expected may have solid Foundation; but yet Persons are out in timing the Thing. *Moses* is to deliver GOD's *Israel* out of *Egypt*, but not when in the Vigour of his Youth he slew the *Egyptian*, *Acts* vii. 24, 25, 30. *Christ* is to come to Judgment; but not when the *Thessalonians* did expect, as *Paul* giveth them to understand, 2 *Thess.* ii. 1, 2. Some have vented their Opinion about the Downfal of Antichrist, the Calling of the *Jews*; but the Time expired when it should be, according to their Imagination, hath been a Confutation sufficient. Reason there is therefore to beware of positive Asser-

tions in this Kind, lest Religion be exposed to Derision.

3. IN REGARD of the Manner of GOD's doing what is to be done. It becometh not Persons to confine the LORD to this or that Way of Working. *David* is to conquer *Goliath*, but not in *Saul's* Armour, but with his Sling, and Stones taken out of the Brook, 1 *Sam.* xvii. *Naaman* is to be cleansed, but not in *Naaman's* fancied Way, 2 *Kings* v. 11. GOD doth great Things for his Distressed Ones: Sometimes He takes one Way, sometimes another. There is more than one Stair-case to the Chamber where He feasts his Friends. His infinite Power and Wisdom bring about Matters beyond the shallow Apprehensions of Men.



## OBSERVATION VI.

*There is an admirable Connection of Things with Things, whereby this or that is effected. Providence hath its Chain, the several Links whereof are set together by an overruling Hand.*

**T**HE Truth of this may be evidenced divers Ways.

1. THIS is emblematically described in the Word: We have a most exquisite Picture of it in *Ezek.* i. the Wheels there are asserted to have a near Neighbourhood, Verse 16. a Wheel in the Middle of a Wheel, to note their Implication or

Con-



Connection; and the living Creatures are coupled with the Wheels in Regard of Influences; for when the living Creatures went, the Wheels went by them, and when the living Creatures were lifted up from the Earth, the Wheels were lifted up, Verse 19.

2. GOD doth expressly own such a Connection of Things with Things. So *Hof. ii. 21. 22.* And it shall come to pass in that Day, I will bear, saith the LORD; I will bear the Heavens, and they shall bear the Earth, and the Earth shall bear the Corn, and the Wine, and the Oil, and they shall hear Jezreel.

3. THERE are clear Examples of this Connection, (1) In natural Things: So in the Place mentioned, *Hof. ii. 21, 22.* so *Pf. civ. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14.* (2) In Civil Affairs: Magistrates are to rule, and People to be ruled, *Rom. xiii. 1.* And where it is not so, there is an Adaption of Things in Way of Punishment, *Judg. xvii. 6.* (3) In Sacred: There is a constituted Order in the Church, *1 Cor. xii. 18.* *Heb. xiii. 17.* And not only is there an Adaption this Way, but likewise in Regard of the Means of Grace, and Grace by the Means. A Connection there is, but yet arbitrary, according to the good Pleasure of GOD, when, and to whom Grace is conveyed by the Means. The Apostle Paul asserts this Connection, saying, *So then Faith cometh by Hearing, and Hearing by the Word of GOD,* *Rom. x. 17.*

4. THIS Connection may be more particularly evidenced, if we cast an Eye, (1) On Instruments; (2) Occasions or Inducements; (3) Means; and, (4) Opportunities for the Management of Matters.

1. THERE is an Adaption in Regard of Instruments. In the Shop of *Providence* there are Instruments of all Sorts. If the LORD will punish the Nations, He can find an Hammer. *Thou art my Battle-ax and Weapons of War, for with thee will I break in Pieces the Nations*, Jer. li. 20. If a Day of Visitation be come for *Abab's* Family, and *Baal's* Worshippers; there is a *Jehu*, a rough Captain-General, who drives furiously, 2 *Kings* ix. 20. If GOD will vouchsafe good Days to a People, He can raise up Political Shepherds, such as *David*, of whom it is said, *he fed them according to the Integrity of his Heart, and guided them by the Skilfulness of his Hands*, Psalm lxxviii. 72. And as there is an Adaption in Regard of Political Instruments, so likewise in Regard of Ecclesiastical. There is a zealous *Elijah* in Times of Apostasy; and a *John the Baptist*, of whom the Angel saith, *He shall go before Him (i. e. Christ) in the Spirit and Power of Elias, to turn the Hearts of the Fathers to the Children, and the Disobedient to the Wisdom of the Just, to make ready a People prepared for the LORD*, Luke i. 17. There is an admirable Adaption in the Church's having not only *Elijahs*, *John Baptists*, but likewise others, whose Endowments are useful to confute Adversaries, to comfort the Distressed, and build up Souls in Converse with GOD.

2. THERE is a suiting of Things in Regard of Occasions. Both the Son's and Father's Discontents are Inducements for *Jacob* to mind a Removal from *Laban*, Gen. xxxi. 1, 2. A Report sounds in *Pharaoh's* Ears, that *Israel* fled; probably he conceived the *Israelites* to fly like Hares, such who might easily be hunted back again to *Egypt*; and so is himself thrust on to his own Ruin,

Ruin, *Exod. xiv. 5.* David's good Service done for *Israel*, hath an Influence on the Elders of *Israel* to bring them to *Hebron*: *Also* (say they) in Time past, when *Saul* was King over us, thou wast he that leddest out and broughtest in *Israel*, 2 Sam. v. 2.

3. THERE is a Connection of Means, in order to this or that which comes to pass: And that as the Means are suitable in order to the End intended, as *Noah's Ark* is proper to prevent drowning by the Flood; or as the Means are not so proper in order to the End intended by the Agent, though effectual to bring about what the LORD had determined. The Wisdom of GOD is seen in the Follies of Men.

4. THERE is an Adaption in Regard of Opportunities. *Abraham* falls in opportunely on *Chedorlaomer*, *Gen. xiv. 15.* *Saul* looks after the Seer; the Maidens said, *Behold he is before you, make Haste now, &c. 1 Sam. ix. 12.* *David* chargeth the *Amalekites*, when behold they were spread upon all the Earth, Eating, and Drinking, and Dancing, because of all the great Spoil that they had taken out of the Land of the *Philistines*, and out of the Land of *Judah*, 1 Sam. xxx. 16.





## OBSERVATION VII.

*There is an Extraordinary Walk of Providence in the World, as well as an Ordinary one.*

THE LORD keeps not always within the Pales of an ordinary and visible Dispensation; such a Walk is too narrow for an Infinite Sovereign and All-wise GOD. Look we abroad into the World, and we cannot well over-look a Display of *Providence* on this wise; and that in Regard of (1) Instruments; (2) Occasions; (3) Means; (4) Opportunities of bringing Things to pass.

*First*, As for Instruments, the LORD is not confined to these. If Thieves do not break in on *Nabal*, and so become Instruments of Divine Wrath; the LORD smites him that he dies, 1 *Sam.* xxv. 38. And if unlikely Agents for this or that Work be brought forth on the Stage, yet nothing hinders, if GOD is pleased, but the Effect is proportionable to a likely Cause of such an Effect. This may be said in spiritual and political Things: GOD (saith the Apostle) *bath chosen the foolish Things of the World to confound the wise*, 1 *Cor.* i. 27. By a little Maid *Naaman* may come to the Knowledge of the true GOD, 2 *Kings* v. 2, 3. It is written of Mr. *Peacock*, that under his Agonies of Conscience, when some Ministers asked him, Whether they should pray for him; he replied, "By no Means; do not so dishonour GOD, as to pray for a Reprobate:" His young Pupil



Pupil standing by, said (with Tears in his Eyes) "Certainly a Reprobate could never be so tender of GOD's Dishonour:" Which he well weighing, was thereby comforted and restored, when neither he with his Learning, nor any other Sons of the Prophets, could prove Sons of Consolation to him. Again in political Things: The Sacred History informs of the noble Acts of *Solomon* when young and tender, 1 *Chron.* xxix. 1. 1 *Kings* iii. 28. And of *Josiah*, who was but eight Years old when he began to reign, 2 *Kings* xxii. 1. Each of their green Years were well made up by the *Ancient of Days*. The Fathers of *Trent* gave Thanks to GOD when *Henry* the Eighth was dead, saying that it was a Miracle that he had left a Son behind him of but nine Years old, that he might not be able to tread in the Father's Steps: Yet they found that *Edward* the Child was more than a Child, when *Providence* by him confronted the Man of Sin.

Secondly, OCCASIONS for Matters have not sometimes that Influence which in Likelihood might be. The *Ephraimites* quarrel with *Gideon* for not calling them forth when he fought with the *Midianites*: Yet their sharp Chiding (*Judg.* viii. 1, 2.) did not in a bloody Battle, as it did at another Time, when the like Contending ended in the Death of forty and two thousand of the *Ephraimites*, *Judg.* xii. 1, 6.

Thirdly, THE Means for Help are sometimes invisible and unlikely. Ye shall not (saith *Elisha* to the distressed Kings for Lack of Water) see Wind, neither shall ye see Rain, yet that Valley shall be filled with Water, that ye may drink, both ye, and your Cattle, and your Beasts, 2 *Kings* iii. 17. Or if the Means do appear, yet they promise nothing to

to Sense and Reason. *Are not Abana and Phaypar, Rivers of Damascus, better than all the Waters of Israel, saith Naaman? May not I wash in them, and be clean?* 2 Kings v. 12. yet *Jordan's* Waters cleanse the Leper. GOD works by what Means He pleaseth. Parties see a *Jordan* before them, and sometimes see neither Wind, nor Rain, and yet have Water, a Help, a Supply: As that Woman reported of in the late *Irish* Rebellion, who being driven into the Mountains, her Milk was gone, and her Child like to perish; and then is found a Bottle full of Milk, by the good *Providence* of GOD: Which teacheth us, by such Experiments, not to confine GOD to Wind, or Rain, or warm Breast-Milk: GOD can provide for his Children without these; and little Helps, through gracious Providence, become great ones.

*Fourthly*, OPPORTUNITIES for Action take not, when GOD in his *Providence* doth inhibit. *David* in the Night enters *Saul's* Camp, finds *Saul* asleep; he slays him not, but brings away the Spear and Cruse of Water, as Testimonies of his Loyalty, 1 Sam. xxvi. 11. *Ishbosheth's* Sleep cost him his Head. There are like Opportunities for Action, and yet like Actions do not follow. So that of *Christ*, Matt. xxvi. 55. *JESUS* said, *Are ye come out as against a Thief, with Swords and Staves, to take me? I sat daily with you, teaching in the Temple, and ye laid no Hold on Me.*

YET beware of slighting ordinary Dispensations of *Providence*: There is a foolish gaping after extraordinary ones. GOD may justly suffer such to starve, who list not to feed on the ordinary Bread of *Providence*, but are for the fine Manchet of miraculous Displays. The Chief Priests, Scribes, and Elders said, *He saved others, Himself He can-*  
not

not save: *If He be the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the Cross, and we will believe Him,* Matt. xxvii. 42. Here is a flying to an extraordinary Providence, or else no Faith, no Christ, no Heaven.

MEANTIME, treasure up more than ordinary Dispensations of Providence, in which thou hast had Share. Hath thy Barrel of Meal wasted not, nor thy Cruse of Oil failed? O forget not that Hand of Providence, which by that Time thou had taken out one Handful, and spent it, did cast in another! Hath God at any Time check'd a *Laban*, calmed an *Esau*, crush'd an *Herod* intending Mischief? O let such Displays be written on the Heart with a Pen of Iron, and Point of a Diamond!

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## OBSERVATION VIII.

Jesus Christ, *as Mediator, is the Father's Vicegerent, Plenipotentiary, or supreme Moderator of Things in the World.*

WHAT Foundation this hath in the Word, may appear divers Ways:

I. THERE are Types of this, before Christ assumed the Human Nature. *This is He that was in the Church in the Wilderness with the Angel, which spake to Him in the Mount Sinai, and with our Fathers who received the lively Oracles to give unto us, to whom our Fathers would not obey, but thrust Him from them: So Stephen, Acts vii. 38, 39.* And as

there are sacred Draughts or Pictures of this, so Predictions of it. Psal. cx. 1. *The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my Right-hand, until I make thine Enemies thy Foot-stool.* Daniel had a predictory Vision: *I saw, saith he, in the Night Visions; and behold, one like the Son of Man came with the Clouds of Heaven, and came to the Antient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him, and there was given Him Dominion, and Glory, and a Kingdom, that all People, Nations, and Languages, should serve Him: His Dominion is an everlasting Dominion, which shall not pass away; and his Kingdom which shall not be destroyed,* Dan. vii. 13, 14.

2. There seems to be a Prælude or Preface to this, in *Christ's* sitting in the Midst of the Doctors, both hearing them, and asking them Questions; and in his Reply to *Mary*, *Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's Business,* Luke ii. 46, 49. And before this, in the Wise Men's coming from the East, enquiring after Him who was born King of the *Jews*, and doing their Homage to Him.

3. THE solemn Voice from Heaven, when *Christ* entered on his publick Work, doth witness this, *Mat. iii. 17. And lo a Voice from Heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*

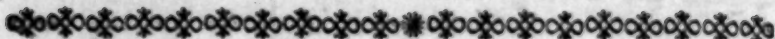
4. THERE are plain and positive Assertions of it: *Mat. xxviii. 18. All Power is given unto Me both in Heaven and in Earth. Ephes. i. 22. And hath put all Things under his Feet, and gave Him to be Head over all Things to the Church. Jo. v. 22, 27. And hath given Him Authority to execute Judgment also, because He is the Son of Man. For the Father judgeth no Man, but hath committed all Judgment to the Son; the Father is said to judge no one, but to have*



have committed all Judgment to the Son, when He judgeth all Things in the Son.

SEE then what Ground there is for honouring *Christ*. This Inference *Christ* Himself maketh, that all Men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. *He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent Him*, John v. 23. with 32. Honour *Christ* then in his Natures; in his Offices, as King, Priest, and Prophet; in his Ordinances, in his Worship, in his Ministers and People. Honour Him both in Judgment and Practice, according to the fore-mentioned Ways.

HERE is Ground for Support and Consolation in the Wilderness of the World. *Christ* reigneth, is good News to *Sion's* Friends. There are four Props for sinking Spirits under black Clouds: (1) *Jesus Christ* hath his glorious Titles, which are not empty ones. His Name shall be called, *Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace*, Isa. ix. 6. He is *the Prince of the Kings of the Earth*, Rev. i. 5. (2) The Holy Spirit, as an Omnipotent Agent, sweetly joins with *Christ* in the Ordering and Management of Matters: See *Zech.* iv. 7. *John* xiv. 26. and xvi. 7, 8. (3) All the *Promises of God* are *Yea and Amen* in *Christ*, 1 *Cor.* i. 20. There is a promised Presence of *Christ* with his People, *Matt.* xxviii. 20. *Rev.* i. 13. (4) Notwithstanding all the Furies of Men and Devils, the sad Face of Things, *Christ* will gloriously discharge the supreme Office of governing the World, and bring all to an Issue every Way glorious: 1 *Cor.* xv. 24. *Rev.* xix. 11, 12, &c.



## OBSERVATION IX.

*The Angels are capacious Wheels, which move in the great Clock of the World: There is a subordinate Agency of Angels, in bringing about Matters in the World.*

**T**HAT the Angels have their Influences, appears,

1. FROM Titles, Appellations, Descriptions, given to and of them. These are they whom the LORD hath sent to walk to and fro thro' the Earth, Zech. i. 10. *Are they not all ministring Spirits, sent forth to minister for them, who shall be Heirs of Salvation, Heb. i. 14?* The Devil likewise, with his Attendants, are set forth as busy Walkers to and fro on the Earth, Job i. 7. 1 Pet. 5. 8.

2. FROM the Work done by them. There is a Transcendency of Operation to be noted. The Bed of ordinary second Causes, is shorter than that this or that Effect can stretch itself on it. The Egyptians are Witnesses for this; for the LORD cast upon them the Fierceness of his Anger, Wrath, and Indignation, and Trouble, by sending evil Angels among them, Psal. lxxviii. 49. An Angel of the LORD in a Night smote in the Camp of the Assyrians, an hundred fourscore and five Thousand, 2 Kings xix. 35.

3. FROM

3. FROM Examples, both in Matters of publick Concern, and personal. What an Influence good Angels have on the publick Affairs of the World, may be proved from *Ezek. i. Dan. iv. 23, and x. 13. Mat. i. 20.* And that evil Angels have their Influences, yet not absolute arbitrary ones, may be collected from *1 Kings xxii.* where the Prince of Darkness is a lying Spirit in the Mouth of the false Prophets, and so the War goes on. Again, the Agency of Angels is extensive to Persons singly considered. *Jacob* sees Angels ascending and descending his Ladder, *Gen. xxviii. 12.* These winged Coursers attend the meanest Saint. *The Angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them, Psal. xxxiv. 7.* and it is well it is so: For the evil Angels are always at Work.

4. FROM the particular Work specified, about which Angels are conversant. Intimations there are in Scripture, both as to good and bad Angels: Each may be found hard at Work in this World.

*First,* THE good Angels may be consider'd with Respect to good and bad ones in the World. Their Work is to do the LORD's Work, and that as it respecteth the LORD's People, divers Ways.

1. GOOD Angels promote Gospel-work in order to Persons being brought to the Means of Grace, or the Means of Grace to them. *Cornelius* was willed by an Angel to send for *Peter*, *Acts x. 3, 5.* A Vision appeared to *Paul* in the Night; *There stood a Man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us, Acts xvi. 9.* The Angels know the State of the Country, and have their Influence on the Gospel-Seeds-

men, for the Casting of the Seed in this or that Plat of Ground. Yea,

2. THE good Angels become truly angelical Doctors, in discovering or intimating the Will of GOD about Matters, and comforting the troubled Spirits of his Servants. Instances there are to this Purpose, 2 *Kings* i. 3, 15. *Dan.* vii. 16. *Rev.* xvii. 7. *Mat.* i. 20. *Acts* xxvii. 23, 24.

3. GOOD Angels are our Guardians, and Defenders under GOD. *Lot* had Experience of this, *Gen.* xix. 11, 16. *My GOD* (saith *Daniel*) *bath sent his Angel, and bath shut the Lions Mouths, that they have not hurt me,* *Dan.* vi. 22. Their Preservation, as the LORD pleaseth, is a Part of the Angels Commission: *Psal.* xci. 11, 12. This *Satan* knew, and therefore urged it, though in a maimed Sense, and to a bad End, *Mat.* iv. 6.

4. GOOD Angels are Encouragers and Helpers of GOD's Saints in that Work unto which GOD calleth them. So in *Elisba's* Case, 1 *Kings* xix. 5, 6, 7. So *Paul* was encouraged to appear before *Cæsar*, *Acts* xxvii. 24. So *Abraham* tells his Servant, saying, *He shall send his Angel before thee,* *Gen.* xxiv. 7.

5. GOOD Angels may sometimes be employ'd in afflicting, in lancing and cutting Work. When thousands fall by Pestilence, an Angel of the LORD is seen with a drawn Sword, 1 *Chron.* xxi. 14, 15. An Angel threatens *Zacharia*, saying, *Thou shalt be dumb,* *Luke* i. 20. It is probable the Angel might strike him with Dumbness, as the Angels smote the *Sodomites* with Blindness.

*Lastly,*



*Lastly*, WHATEVER other Work the good Angels do, they are not wanting in Death. *Lazarus* dies, and is carried by the Angels into Paradise, *Luke* xvi. 22. Yea, their Care extends to the Carcass, nay the Dust of a Believer. At the Resurrection the Angels gather together the Elect from the four Winds, from one End of Heaven to another, *Matt.* xxiv. 31.

In the next Place, the Ministry of good Angels respects the Wicked in the World; and that,

1. BY Way of Inhibition, Check, or Reproof. The Angel of the LORD said unto *Balaam*, *Wherefore hast thou smitten thine Ass these three Times?* *Numb.* xxii. 32.

2. BY Way of Compassion, or doing some Office of Kindness. There is a Voice of distressed Nature, as well as the Voice of Grace, which comes up before the LORD. *Ismael* hath a Share in angelical Kindness, when like to perish for Want of Water, *Gen.* xxi. 16, 17, 18, 19, 20.

3. BY Way of Punishment: They are Executioners of Divine Wrath. The *Sodomites* were smitten with Blindness; *Syrians* destroyed by an Angel of the LORD: And tho' human Creatures shall be Instruments to burn the Whore of *Babylon*, yet that may include the Ministry of Angels; they may prepare the Fuel, and blow the Bellows; for seven Angels are said to pour out the Vials of the Wrath of GOD upon the Earth, *Rev.* xvi.

EVIL Angels also have their Shops in the World: They are *Rulers of the Darkness of this World*, *Eph.* vi. 12. How the evil Angels have their Influence both on godly and ungodly Men, I shall just

just touch, and so pass to the Improvement of what hath been said.

*First*, THE Devil hath his Design against pious Men, and that divers Ways:

1. IN tempting them to Sin: He hath his Wiles, *Eph. vi. 11.* He labours not only to catch young but old Soldiers in his Net: *David* was an experienced Warrior, yet *Satan* stood up and provoked *David* to number *Israel*, *1 Chron. xxi. 1.* the sad Success of that Temptation, we have there recorded in the Verses following.

2. IN disquieting them one Way or other, tho' he hath not Matter of just Charge to draw up against them. The Devil is the great Troubler of the Christian's Quiet: He is *the Accuser of the Brethren*, *Rev. xii. 10.* Both he, and those who are acted by him, are false Witnesses risen up, and lay Things to a Believer's Charge that he knew not, *Psalms xxxv. 11.* Go we to that good Apostle *Paul*, and he will tell us, he cannot be quiet for a buffeting Devil, *2 Cor. xii. 7.*

3. IN hindering them in some particular good Work intended by them: The Devil throws Blocks in their Way; he hath his Barricados to obstruct the Christian in his Course. *Wherefore we would have come unto you (even I Paul) once and again, but Satan hindered us,* *1 Thes. ii. 18.*

4. IN afflicting of them in their Body, Relations, Estate; when GOD sees fit to exercise his People: A clear and full Example for this we have in the first and second Chapters of *Job*.

*Secondly,*

Secondly, SATAN hath his Design on wicked Men; and that,

1. IN staying them off from what is good. He works with Might and Main, that they may not come to the Knowledge of GOD: *If our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, in whom the God of this World hath blinded the Minds of them which believe not, lest the Light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the Image of GOD, should shine unto them,* 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4. The Devil holds up his monstrous Glasses before the Sinner's Face; he fills their Heads with Prejudices against the good Ways of GOD, his Messengers, and People; who shall be looked on as Troublers of a Nation, City, Parish, Family, that are only the Awakeners thereof, 1 Kings xviii. 17, 18.

2. IN pushing them on to what is evil. He will have them to be positive, as well as negative Sinners; not only not to act for GOD, but against Him. The Masters of the *Pythonefs* Damsel become Persecutors of *Paul* and *Silas*, *Acts* xvi. 16, 19, &c. *Judas* becomes the Betrayer of his LORD and Master, *John* xiii. 27. *Satan* enter'd into him; and many Grandees become *Satan's* Hangmen: He hath his Influence on them; for he doth not in Mens Shape cast GOD's Servants into Prison, and yet is said to do it, *Rev.* ii. 10.

3. IN being ready to hasten the Destruction of them, theirs, and what they have. The Devil cares not how soon he can secure most of his Agents in the Prison of Hell: He delighteth in Mischief, and needs not a Motive to persuade *Ahab* to go up and fall at *Ramoth-Gilead*.

LOOK

Look then after an Interest in *Christ*. For, (1) Hereby the evil Angels need not be dreaded: *Christ*, the victorious one, breaks the Bow and Spear of Hell: *Satan* had Experience of the Power and Valour of the Christian's General in that Wilderness-Conflict, *Matt. iv.* The Devil, with all his Forces, shall not tread down the weakest Soldier in *Christ's* Army. (2) As the evil Angels need not be dreaded as Enemies; so the good Angels may be looked on as Friends. It is said of *Jaco*, *he went on his Way, and the Angels of God met him*, Gen. xxxii. 1. The good Angels will be found faithful Friends to those who are good; they were *Jacob's* Guard; and the Way to have *Jacob's* Guard, is to have *Jacob's* God.

2. BELIEVE more, and live more in the Doctrine of the Agency of Angels. It may put most to the Blush, that they live as if there were neither good nor bad Angels. The Practice of most holds little Correspondence with their Belief. It concerns then Persons to mind their Duty, and that in Respect both of good and bad Angels:

1. IN Respect of good Angels: And so (1) bless God for the Ministry of good Angels. If Sheep, Oxen, with other Creatures ordained for the Use of Man, oblige Man to be thankful to God; why not the good Angels, who are ministering Spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be Heirs of Salvation? It well becomes Men to praise God for Angels, tho' we are not to pray to Angels.

If it be said here, There is not such an Appearance of good Angels, as of old, and therefore Is there an Agency of good Angels?



1. I ANSWER, To argue from the not visible Appearance of good Angels, to a Non-agency of good Angels, is absurd ; for by the same Reason the evil Angels are no Agents, unless they have a visible Shape. I do not think that *Job* saw the Devil, and yet he felt him to his Sorrow. Good Angels are at their Work, tho' neither good nor bad Men see them. *Daniel* had no Ground to believe that the Angel neglected the Church's Affairs, because he saw him not for one and twenty Days, *Dan. x. 12, 13.*

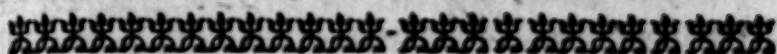
2. IT is not denied, that there has been even in later Ages, some angelical Appearances. It is true, the good Angels bring no new Doctrine ; for that were to incur the apostolical Curse, *Gal. i. 8.* Howbeit this inferreth not, but the LORD may at Times, after a more than ordinary Way, by them help the Understanding in the right Perception of some Scripture, direct about the Prevention of Dangers, and relieve others under Distresses. *Zuinglius* had a Passage of Scripture suggested to him in a Vision, which cleared up the Meaning of that Phrase, *This is my Body* ; and that at a very seasonable Time. *Scultetus* relateth a Story of *Gryneus*, which happened at *Spires* : There comes one of such a Port, Presence, and Beauty, as did bespeak singular Dignity ; he comes to *Melancthon's* Lodging, asketh for *Gryneus*, who was then absent, and withal signifies there were Snares preparing for *Gryneus*, into which he would not have that good Man fall ; and so departs. *Gryneus* returns, whom *Melancthon* bids forthwith be gone from *Spires* to *Heidelberg* ; and not long after his Departure, an armed Company comes to apprehend him. *Luther* tells, how at *Eiliben* a Woman with two Children suffered extreme Want in Time of Dearth ; they go towards a Well,  
and

and meet with a Man (an Angel) who ask'd, Whether she thought to get something to eat at the Fountain? She said, Why not? For all Things are possible to GOD, and easy to be done; He that fed the *Israelites* forty Years with Manna, can preserve me and mine with drinking Water. The Angel said, Go Home, and thou shalt find three Bushels of Meal. And so it was.

3. EXERCISE more Faith and Hope in GOD under Dangers. Here is no Reason why the Christian should be hopeless in the Lack of visible Means. The Servant of the Man of GOD, when the Host compassed the City both with Horses and Chariots, said unto *Elisha*, *Alas my Master! what shall we do!* He answered, *Fear not; for they that be with us are more than they that be with them:* And *Elisha* prayed, and said, LORD, I pray Thee open his Eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the Eyes of the young Man, and he saw; and behold the Mountain was full of Horses and Chariots of Fire round about *Elisha*, 2 Kings vi. 15, 16, 17.

IN Reference to evil Angels: Admire the LORD's Free-Grace, in being brought out of a State of spiritual Bondage to them. This Lesson is pressed by the Apostle on the *Ephesians*, who in Time past walked according to the Course of the World, according to the Prince of the Power of the Air, the Spirit that now worketh in the Children of Disobedience, Eph. ii. 1, 2, 3.

Lastly, BE thankful that evil Angels are restrained from doing Mischief. That GOD ties up the Dogs of Hell is no small Mercy.



## OBSERVATION X.

*The same Creature may prove a Friend or Foe,  
as GOD in his Providence ordereth.*

**T**HE Truth of this Observation appears,  
1. From Assertions in Scripture: So *Job*  
xxxvii. 11, 12, 13. *Also by watering He*  
*wearieth the thick Cloud, He scattereth his bright*  
*Cloud, and it is turned about by his Counsels, that*  
*they may do whatsoever He commandeth them upon the*  
*Face of the World, in the Earth. He causeth it to*  
*come, whether for Correction, or a Rod, or for*  
*his Land, or for Mercy. And as this holds in*  
*Things natural, so also in moral Agents: So Prov.*  
xvi. 7. *When a Man's Ways please the LORD, He*  
*maketh his Enemies to be at Peace with him. An*  
*Enemy, when and where He pleaseth to exert his*  
*Will, becomes a Friend, and a Friend an Enemy.*

2. FROM Examples: The same Waters which  
were *Israel's Fortrefs*, are a Sepulchre for the *E-*  
*gyptians, Psalm cxxxvi. 13, 14, 15. The Egyptians*  
*deal with the Israelites at their going out of Egypt,*  
*rather as with Sons and Daughters, than as Slaves;*  
*they give them their Portion. The LORD gave the*  
*People Favour in the Sight of the Egyptians, so that*  
*they gave unto them such Things as they required,*  
Exod. xii. 32. It is said of *Nebuchadnezzar, They*  
*shall drive thee from Men, Dan. iv. 32. Who*  
*were those Drivers, but those that were his Re-*  
*storers? For so it is said, Verse 36. My Counsellors*

and my Lords sought unto me, and I was established in my Kingdom, and excellent Majesty was added to me.

3. FROM particular Demonstrations: 1. Tho' the Creatures have their noxious Qualities, yet God can and does inhibit them from hurting, when He sees good. A Lion slew the Prophet, and not the Ass which stood by the Carcass, 1 Kings xiii. 24. The Lions devour not *Daniel*; but they have the Mastery of his Accusers, and break all their Bones in Pieces e're ever they come to the Bottom of the Den, *Dan.* vi. 24. A Viper fastned on *Paul's* Hand, and he shook off the Beast into the Fire, and felt no Harm, *Acts* xxviii. 3, 5. *Daniel's* Lions, and *Paul's* Viper, become negative Friends, for they hurt them not: And positive Friends, occasionally; inasmuch as these Creatures, being served with a Divine Writ of Inhibition, both King *Darius* and the barbarous People are induced to shew Kindness to these Servants of God.

2. As God doth inhibit Creatures from being hurtful, so he doth render them helpful and useful. They were the barbarous People that shewed no little Kindness to *Paul*, and that before the *Viper-Providence* happened, *Acts* xxviii. 2. *Elijah* had a notable Experiment of this: *I have* (saith the LORD) *commanded the Ravens to feed thee*, 1 Kings xvii. 4. The Ravens brought him Bread and Flesh in the Morning, and Bread and Flesh in the Evening, Verse 6. One would have thought the Ravens were not fit Trustees for Bread and Flesh; they would rather have eaten it, than brought it to be eaten; but what shall they do, if the great God of Heaven and Earth hath so appointed. I could tell here a Story from a very good Hand: A good Man was in great Distress for Want of Food; and at the



the very Time a strange Dog, unknown to any of his Neighbours, comes into his House, with a Shoulder of Mutton, which he fairly lays down, and gets him away.

FROM the Creatures being made Friends to us,

(1) FORGET not whence it is that the Creatures smile on thee: It is from the Pleasure of their LORD, that these Servants in the general, and those of them which are of rough Temper in particular, bespeak you fairly, and run to and fro willingly to do you Service. *I will (saith the Psalmist) both lay me down in Peace, and sleep, for Thou LORD only makest me to dwell in Safety,* Psalm iv. 8. *The LORD is my Shepherd, I shall not want,* Psalm xxiii. 1.

(2) LABOUR to demean thyself in all Godliness and Honesty, suitably to thy Mercies: There is good Reason for such to serve GOD, as have so many good Servants to wait upon them: There is an Obligation on Man to obey his GOD; and the more his Mercies are, the stronger is the Obligation.

FROM the Creatures being Scourges: 1. Observe, how the sweetest Wine may become the sharpest Vinegar; and this, (1) With Respect to Things. (2) With Respect to Persons.

(1) WITH Respect to Things: The good Things of this Life may be Matter of Affliction: *Because thou servedst not the LORD thy GOD with Joyfulness, and with Gladness of Heart, for the Abundance of all Things; therefore shalt thou serve thine Enemies which the LORD shall send against thee, in*

*Hunger, and Thirst, and in Nakedness, and in the Want of all Things, Deut. xxviii. 47, 48.*

(2) WITH Respect to Persons, as Magistrates, Ministers, Relations, or Friends: All these, instead of Roses, may become Briars some Way or other.

1. MAGISTRATES, who are the Ministers of GOD for Good, may be snatched away by Death to the Grief of a People who sat under their refreshing Shadow: Their Death becomes the Resurrection of the Subject's Sorrows: Witness this in the Case of good *Josiah*, who dies and is buried, and all *Judah* and *Jerusalem* mourned for him: Or if they be not seized on by Death, they may prove the Death or Bane of a Nation by their Follies. Instances enough there are for this in Holy Writ, and History.

2. MINISTERS become afflictive; and that many Ways: When Sins abound amongst a People, Pride, Barrenness under the Means, slighting Ministers, and idolizing of them (for these are sad Extremes) do, with other Sins, provoke the LORD to afflict in and by Ministers: Sometimes they are taken away by Death. *John's* Disciples had too high Thoughts of their Master; they began (it seems) to make a Party against *Christ* Himself, *John* iii. 25, 26. *John* was not yet cast into Prison; afterward he was, and beheaded too. Sometimes, though GOD continue them in the World, yet He may make their Tongues cleave to the Roof of their Mouths. The Pipes shall be stopt, and the Conduits not run as formerly with the Water of Life. There is a Time when the Prophets of the LORD are in their Caves, and not upon the House-Top, *1 Kings* xviii. 4. Again, some may become

become afflictive by their Slips, Falls, Apostasies. One *Speicer*, in *Germany*, was so powerful in Preaching, that Whores left the Stews, and betook themselves to another Course of Living; and yet after, he returned to the Tents of the *Papists*, and miserably perished. It is said of *Swenckfield*, who beguiled many with great swelling Words, that he had a well-meaning Heart, but an erroneous Head. God is righteous, as in the digging of a Grave for some in the Vineyard, and the binding of others Hand and Foot; so in the Permission of others to leap over the Hedge of the Vineyard, and to be bewilder'd in wild and extravagant Conceits.

3. RELATIONS become Gall and Wormwood.

(1) The Husband is sometimes a *Nabal*, and Folly is with him, 1 *Sam.* xxv. 25. Or if he be otherwise, his Death gives Life to the Wife's Sorrows, as 2 *Kings* iv. 1. *Thy Servant my Husband* (said the Widow to *Elisha*) *is dead, and thou knowest that thy Servant feared the LORD; and the Creditor is come to take to him my two Sons for Bond-men.*

(2) If the Wife be not more or less a chiding *Zipporah*, *Exod.* iv. 25. a mocking *Michal*, 2 *Sam.* vi. 20. a sullen *Vashti*, *Esther* i. 12. yet there was never a Marriage, but there must be a Funeral; and virtuous beautiful *Sarah* must away out of *Abraham's* Sight, *Gen.* xxiii. 4.

(3) CHILDREN are often the Sluices of Sorrow. *Dinah* was ravished: *Simeon* and *Levi* make their Father *Jacob* to stink among the Inhabitants of the Land: *Reuben* lay with his Father's Concubine: *Joseph* is hated of his Brethren, and sent away into *Egypt* to the Grief of the old Man; who, taking it for granted that *Joseph* was dead, refused to be comforted, *Gen.* xxxvii. 35.

(4) SERVANTS prove vile and abominable. Good *Mephibosheth's* Servant was a false Accuser of his Master, and got away half of his Lord's Estate, 2 Sam. xvi. 3, 4. 2 Sam. xix. 24 to 30.

(5) SUPERIORS, as Parents and Masters, are sometimes cursed Creatures: *Jonathan* is called by his Father, *Son of a perverse rebellious Woman*; yea, a Javelin is cast at him from the Hand of a Father, 1 Sam. xx. 30, 31.

4. CHOICE Friends bring up the Rear of Sorrows: Death cuts the Knot of Friendship: *I am distressed for thee my Brother Jonathan*, (said David) 2 Sam. i. 26. And if the Worm feed not on them in the Grave, yet a *Whisperer separateth chief Friends*, Prov. xvi. 28. yea, there is some unmortified Lust, by Reason whereof the Friend is turned into an Enemy: So *Psalms* xli. 9. *Yea, mine own familiar Friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my Bread, hath lift up his Heel against me.*

Secondly, As it concerns to observe when the Creatures become Corrosives; so, to improve this Dispensation. Let it be a Means to cure some Sin or other, which is the procuring Cause of all: The Creatures frown; but doth not GOD frown on some Sin, in their Frowning? It would better become Persons who cry out of Superiors, to consider the taking Cold in the Feet, is often the Cause of Disorder in the Head: The Sins of People, Wives, Children, Servants, are the cold Vapours which cause a Distemper: Eye then Sin, so as more to be abased for it; and Creatures less, in a Way of Disquiet.



## OBSERVATION XI.

*The great GOD is greatly to be seen in the meanest or least of his Creatures.*

1. **T**HE meanest or least of the Creatures set off more the Beauty of the Universe. A Giant is more conspicuous, when a Dwarf is brought forth with him: The vast Extensions of the Elephant are the more illustrious, when compared with the small Dimensions of a Worm or Flye.

2. **T**HE very Smallness or Littleness of the Creatures doth set forth the Wisdom of GOD. The curious Workmanship about a Watch or some lesser Piece of Artifice, commends the Skill of the Artificer. Creeping Things, and Birds, as well as Beasts and Cattle, bear a Part in the Choir, to sound forth the Praises of their Maker and Preserver, *Psalms cxlviii. 7, 10.*

3. **T**HE Creatures by Reason of their Meanness, did not hold back the Sentence of Approbation at their Creation. The History of the Creation comprehends little Fishes, Birds, and creeping Things; and GOD saw that all was good, *Gen. i. 20, 21, 25.*

4. **T**HE meanest Creatures have their Use: They are no dumb Cyphers in the World's Arithmetick: The

The Herb is said to be for the Service of Man, *Pf. civ. 14.* Even Serpents and Vermin are serviceable, in attracting to themselves that Venom which otherwise might be of dangerous Consequence to Man: Worms and Flyes are Baits for Fishes, and Food for Birds.

5. WHAT is wanting in the meanest of Creatures one Way, is made up another. *There be four Things which are but little upon the Earth, but they are exceeding wise: The Ants are a People not strong, yet they prepare their Meat in the Summer: The Conies are but feeble Folks, yet make they their Houses in the Rocks: The Locusts have no King, yet go they forth all of them by Bands: The Spider taketh Hold with her Hands, and is in the King's Palaces, Prov. xxx. 24, &c.*

6. THERE is a Display of the glorious Attributes of GOD in the meanest of Creatures; and that in a more than ordinary Way, as He is pleased to make Use of them. We may behold as in a Glass, (1) The Goodness of GOD: (2) The Wisdom: (3) The Power: And (4) The Justice or Severity.

(1) The Goodness or Mercy of GOD is seen, when He used them for the Help of Man. The Ravens in a Time of Famine bring *Elijah* Bread and Flesh, *1 Kings xvii. 6.* The Stories are known, how *Moulin*, at the Time of the *Parisian* Massacre, was cherished for a Fortnight by a Hen, which came constantly and laid her Eggs where he lay hid. And at *Cales*, an *Englishman* who crept into an Hole under a Pair of Stairs, was there preserved by Means of a Spider, which had woven its Web over the Hole, and so the Soldiers slighted the Search there. There are other Stories which I have met with; as that of *Aristomenes*, who being  
thrown

thrown into a deep Cave for dead with others, found his Way out by Means of a Fox which came thither, and pointed a Passage. The Lord *Mountjoy* coming from *Ireland*, must have perished, had not *Providence* befriended them to a Wonder. "The Sky being overcast with a thick Fog, and "we bearing all Sails, fell suddenly upon the Skirries, an hideous great black Rock; where, after "so many Dangers escaped in the Wars, it pleased "GOD miraculously to deliver us from being cast "away (as it were) in they very Haven: For certain Birds, called *Gulls*, seeing our Ship ready to "rush upon them, and their Desert Habitations, "with full Sails; rose crying and fluttering about "us; whereat the Captain of the Pinace being "amazed, looked out, and beholding that terrible "Spectacle, cried to the Steer-man, *Aloof for Life*; "which fearful Voice might have daunted him, as "it did most in the Ship; but he stoutly did his "Work, answering, *Helm a-Board*; which done, "the Ship by Force of the Stern, and by the Help "of the Tide coming in between it and the Rock, "turned about with strange Swiftnes, and swam "along by the Rock, so near it, that the Boat, "hanging at the Stern, dashed against it." Hither may likewise be referred that in *Exod.* xxiii. 28. *And I will send Hornets before thee.* These were *Israel's* forlorn Hope, and did notable Execution, as *Joshua* intimates, *Josh.* xxiv. 12. And thus for Mercy displayed in the meanest Creatures.

(2) THE Wisdom of GOD is displayed: For by the meanest Creatures He exalts his Wisdom to check the Pride of the greatest of Men. The LORD takes down the swelling Humour of Men, by Means contemptible, and not to be contemned: Frogs and Lice shall teach *Pharaoh*, who is the LORD to be obeyed: The Magicians, who would not see the Hand

Hand of GOD in the Frogs, acknowledge the Finger of GOD in the Lice, *Exod. viii. 18, 19.* *Herod*, who is cried up for a God, is found to be a mortal Man; Worms lay his Honour in the Dust, *Acts xii. 23.* The Wisdom of GOD is seen likewise in helping distressed ones. They were not the Captains of Fifties, Hundreds, and Thousands, that did help *Israel* out of *Egypt*: GOD doth with weak and contemptible Tools in the Eye of Reason, erect the stately House of some gracious Dispensation, for his People to shelter themselves in. *Theodoret* tells, how *Sapor*, King of the *Persians*, besieged the City of *Nisibis*, in which the Christians were sore distressed: On a sudden a vast Company of Wasps or Flies came, got into the Snouts of the Elephants, and the Ears of the Horses and other Beasts, so that the Elephants and Horses brake their Harness, cast their Riders, and forced the disordered Ranks to fly. The King hereupon beholding the Hand of GOD, is necessitated to withdraw the Siege.

(3) THE Power of GOD is wonderfully seen in Matters of this Nature. The LORD exalted his Power in the Slaughter of *Goliath*, by a Stone cast out of a Sling: The Trumpets of Rams-Horns, if the LORD breathe forth his Power by them, shall quickly blow down the Walls of *Jericho*.

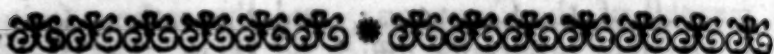
(4) THE Justice and Severity of GOD may be viewed in the foregoing Instances: For the Attributes of GOD concenter in one and the same Dispensation. GOD doth by one Dispensation help his People, and strike their Adversaries. The LORD writes bitter Things by the Hand of the meanest Creatures, when He will make Use of such Amanuenses: The Palmer-Worm, Locust, Canker-Worm, Caterpillar, shall lay desolate and waste



waste the Country, if He so dictate in his Providence, *Joel* i. 4, 5, 6, 7. *Amos* iv. 9.

OBSERVE then the Display of Providence in the meanest of the Creatures; and the rather, seeing GOD may otherwise afflict by them. A Worm doth remotely bite *Jonah* to the Quick: It is an Instrument, according to the Position of Circumstances, for his no little Vexation, *Jonah* iv. 7, 8. And much of Kindness is handed by these Creatures, as the greater Creator doth extend his Providence in them. How much are Men beholden to GOD, not only in the Day-Time, but in the Night-Season, in defending them from Perils by the least or meanest of the Creatures. Pope *Adrian* was choaked by a Fly. A Spider might creep into the Nostrils while one is asleep, and so a Man might sleep the Sleep of Death. And as for positive Kindness handed by these, Instances have been given, and others might be. The great GOD, who made Use of a great Fish to preserve *Jonah*, can make Use of little Fishes for the Relief of others. The Inhabitants of *Rochelle* were as well supplied by a Multitude of Shell-Fish in the Time of their Scarcity of Provision, as if a Whale had been cast on Shore amongst them: Yea, a little Fish may, at some Times, be more subservient for the Help of distressed ones, than a greater one. I remember a pertinent Story, which a worthy Minister (now with GOD) told me: Some pious Passengers were in a Ship which had sprang a Leak; they pray, whilst others labour at the Pump, and that to little Purpose; 'till at length they espy the Water within to be at a Stand, and then take Heart to ply the Pump, and so get into an Harbour; the Ship after, in the Dock, is searched, and there is found a certain Hole, with a Fish exactly filling the said Hole. Thus, *whatsoever the LORD pleased, that did*

*did He in Heaven, and in Earth, in the Seas, and in all deep Places, Psalm cxxxv. 6.*



## OBSERVATION XII.

*Providence is the great Steward of the Household of this World.*

**T**HIS appears two Ways. 1. THERE is plain Assertion of it in Scripture. The Word is not silent in commending the Goodness, Wisdom, and Power of GOD, in providing for the Creatures which are different for Kind, and many of each Kind: So *Psalm civ. 27, 28. These wait all upon Thee, that Thou mayst give them their Meat in due Season; that Thou givest them, they gather: Thou openest thy Hand, they are filled with Good. And Psalm cxlv. 15, 16. The Eyes of all wait upon Thee, and Thou givest them their Meat in due Season: Thou openest thine Hand, and satisfiest the Desire of every living Thing.*

2. THERE are particular Demonstrations of this, grounded on Experience of GOD's Providence more or less wonderfully displayed, as to his Way of providing for Multitudes of Persons. The *Israelites* in the Wilderness for forty Years are there provided for. Their Number, the Place where, and the Time of their being there, all speak the glorious Display of Providence, as *Mos's* doth intimate, in pressing the Remembrance thereof, *Deut. viii. 2, 3, 16.* Our Saviour *Christ*, in feeding the

the Multitude in a Desert Place, and that with five Loaves and two Fishes, gives a Taste of God's Providence in feeding vast Multitudes in the World.

If it be said here, these Instances are more than ordinary:

It may be answered, (1) These however fall in as a Part of the Stewardship of Providence.

(2) PROVIDENCE is wonderful at other Times, when Bread is provided; and that enough for so vast an Household. If *Christ* had put forth his Power in a visible Proportion of Bread and Fish for the Multitude, whether by Creation, or by an Inclination of the Hearts of Persons to have brought in Provision at the very Time when it was to be used, there had been a glorious Display of Providence these Ways. That the World is provided for, is wonderful; though the Manner how, be different, as the LORD pleaseth.

(3) THAT the Providence of GOD holds some Kind of Correspondence with those Instances of the *Israelites*, and the Multitude fed by *Christ*; may more safely be affirmed, than denied. For,

1. IF there be a Display of Providence in *Canaan's* becoming a Wilderness; why not in a Wilderness becoming a *Canaan*, as the LORD shall exalt the Glory of his Attributes both as to the one, and the other? If GOD withdraw his Blessing, the full Barns become empty. There are Ways how Food is made useless: So *Hag.* i. 6. *Ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with Drink; ye cloath you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth Wages, earneth Wages to put it into a Bag with Holes.* It is wonderful to observe how some

have Penury in their Plenty, as others have a Kind of Plenty in their Penury. That which is the Ground of this wonderful Variety, is the *Providence* of GOD. *Job* tells of the Secret of GOD upon his Tabernacle, *Job* xxix. 4. There is a secret Blessing, and a secret Curse, which may be noted in the LORD's Dispensations.

2. WHAT GOD hath done heretofore, may be a Pledge of what He will do, though not after the like Sort in all Particulars. GOD fed the *Israelites* in the Wilderness with Manna; He provided for them then, that Way: If others have their Wilderness, his *Providence* may wonderfully be seen in taking Care of them. Thus under more than ordinary Difficulties, there may be more than an ordinary Display of *Providence*. Others, beside the Widow of *Sarepta*, can tell Stories, touching the Meal in the Barrel, and the Oil in the Cruse, not wasting and failing, 1 *Kings* xvii. 14. they have been holpen along in their particular Wilderness; their little hath gone a great Way with them.

3. If due Consideration were had to the World, one may say, that it is a large Wilderness, where the Footsteps of the old Wilderness-Dispensation in *Moses's* Days, and the feeding of the Multitude in the Desert by *Christ*, may be traced. "I verily believe (saith *Luther*) that there do not grow so many Sheaves of Corn, as there are People in the World; and yet we are all fed." To this accords the Judgment of *Leiser*, who withal relates this Story: "*Frederick* the Third, at an Assembly of People at *Colen*, when a vast Multitude of many Nations were met, doubting Provision would come far short for the Relief of such a Multitude, commanded both Men and Loaves to be numbered; and when the Number of the

" Men



“ Men was found far to exceed, he feared many  
“ would perish with Famine:” But it was other-  
wise; for no one perished, they had Food to the  
full, and great Plenty did remain.

1. SEE then the Atheism of those who can see  
no other Way than a bloody one, for a Nation's  
Subsistence! In the civil Wars of *France*, when  
Complaints were made of barbarous Outrages, the  
Duke of *Guise* answered, “ There is no Remedy;  
“ we have too much People in *France*: I will deal  
“ so, as Victuals may be cheap.” This Man of  
Blood little considered GOD's *Providence*, which is  
the Store-house of Provision. Had he cast an Eye  
back towards *Canaan*, a less Country than *France*,  
he might have replied, *Pray, that the Sword may*  
*be turned into a Plough-share, and the Spear into a*  
*Pruning-hook.* Let Atheistical Politicians talk then  
of their bloody Way; let Christians remember the  
Way of Obedience to GOD. So *Deut. xxviii. 1,*  
*12. And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken*  
*diligently unto the Voice of the LORD thy GOD, to*  
*observe and to do all his Commandments: The LORD*  
*shall open unto thee his good Treasure, the Heaven to*  
*give thee Rain unto thy Land in his Season, and to*  
*bless all the Work of thine Hand.*

2. SECURE a special Interest in the great Steward  
of the World. It is said of pious Mr. *Hieron*, that  
when his Wife was making her Moan to him, by  
Reason of a large Family of Children, whom now  
he was about to leave to the wide World; he re-  
plied, “ GOD, who provideth for the young Ra-  
“ vens, will provide for the *Hierons*.” Thus said  
that Man of GOD; and his Family had Experience  
of GOD's gracious *Providence* towards them. It  
well becometh Christians then to exercise Faith on  
GOD's *Providence* for them and theirs. This is a

Point that our Saviour insists on, *Matt. vi. 26, &c.* There are two general Arguments for it: The one, *If GOD take Care for the Fowls of the Air, which sow not, neither reap, nor gather into Barns; will He not feed you?* The other, *If GOD gives a Kingdom, spares not his own Son; will He not take Care for lesser Matters, so far as they are needful in this State of Pilgrimage?*



### OBSERVATION XIII.

**PROVIDENCE** hath its different Courts, in which the Sons of Men have their different Stations.

**A**S in the Temple of old there were divers Places appropriated to different Persons; so in the great House of *Providence*: Some are Children, others Servants. There are three Courts in which Men may be considered.

1. **THERE** is the outermost Circle of common *Providence*: Here all Men may be placed. *The LORD maketh his Sun to rise on the Evil and on the Good, and sendeth Rain on the Just and on the Unjust, Matt. v. 45. Nevertheless He left not Himself without a Witness, in that He did Good, and gave us Rain from Heaven, and fruitful Seasons, filling our Hearts with Food and Gladness, Acts xiv. 17.*

2. **THERE** is an intermediate Circle of special *Providence*, which respects Members of the visible Church.

Church. Unto the *Jews* were committed the Oracles of GOD: They are called the Children of the Kingdom, inasmuch as GOD honoured them with his Worship and Ordinances.

3. THERE is the inmost Circle of peculiar *Providence*. In this Circle are the Children of GOD. The former Circle is a visible one; this invisible: The former of larger Circumference than this latter, *for many are called, but few are chosen*, Matt. xxii.

14. The Apostle *Paul* doth describe this by *an House, in which are Vessels of divers Sorts, not only Vessels of Gold and Silver, but also of Wood and of Earth; some to Honour, and some to (comparative) Dishonour*.

QUARREL not then with GOD, because all are not within the inmost Circle of *Providence*. Corrupt Reason is ready to enter its Plea against GOD, as the Apostle intimates, *Rom. ix. 19*. But whatever the Pleas of Reason are, the Discoveries of GOD in Scripture should be decisive. For,

1. Is there Ground to dispute with the Almighty for his not making all the Creatures of one or two Kinds? The LORD needed not Direction from Man in the Creation of several Sorts of Creatures, as they are brought forth on the Stage of the World, *Gen. i*. His Will and Wisdom is to check Man's Peevishness and Folly. It is not from a Defect of Power in GOD, as if Stones could not be turned into Children of *Abraham*: But the LORD's Will is the supreme Reason why the Creatures are different.

2. HATH mortal Man, without the least Impeachment of Cruelty, a Liberty to appoint such and such Beasts, some for the Plough, and others

for other Uses? And shall this be denied to the Almighty? There is unquestionably a Distance by Myriads of Myriads, between Man and an infinite God. That Distance between Man and Beasts, is but as the Ten Thousandth Part of an Atom, in Comparison of the whole World; yea, not that, in Comparison of the Distance between Man and the LORD JEHOVAH. To quarrel then at the LORD's Prerogative, is for a Man to allow that in himself, which he will not allow to his Maker and Sovereign Disposer.

3. MEN come not into the inmost Circle of *Providence*, not because they cannot, but because they will not. A Man is told, that if he travel on in such a Road, his Throat will be cut, for there the Cut-throats are in Ambush; if this Man will go on, his own perverse Will is in Fault. A Man is sick, and this or that Remedy is prescribed, and he will not make Use of it; he dies of the Disease, but the mortal Disease of his Wilfulness may rather be termed the Cause of his Death. This is the Sinner's Case. *Ye will not come unto Me, that ye might have Life.*

Look after a Place then in the inmost Circle of *Providence*. An Interest in GOD, as reconciled through *Jesus Christ*, is the Pearl of great Price to be looked after. The Merchant in the Parable parts with all for this Pearl, *Matt. xiii. 45, 46.*







## OBSERVATION XIV.

*There is a Subserviency of the Affairs of State,  
to the Affairs of God's People.*

**T**HAT the Motions in the World have a Reference primarily to those who are called out of the World, appears,

1. FROM plain Assertions in Scripture. *This saith the LORD your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; For your Sake I have sent to Babylon, and have brought down all their Nobles, and the Chaldeans, whose Cry is in their Ships, Isaiah xliii. 14. And except (saith Christ) those Days should be shortned, no Flesh should be saved; but for the Elects Sake those Days shall be shortned, Matt. xxiv. 22.*

2. FROM the Types and historical Passages in Scripture to this End. Thus GOD instructed *Abraham* by the smoaking Furnace, what would be the Case of his People, and what would be the Issue of all, *Gen. xv.* *Ezekiel's* Vision of the Wheels, runs Hand in Hand with the former, Times being distinguished; both agree as to the Motions in *Egypt* and in *Babylon*; and that as the *Jews* are concerned in their Motions of State. *Daniel*, by various Types, is taught of the Monarchies, and how it would be in the Sheep of the LORD's Pasture, *Dan. vii. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12.* *John* in the *Revelation* is informed of the State of the Church under the *Roman* Power: These Types are in a Sort an  
History

History of Things; and besides these, there are Passages by Way of Narrative, which prove the same Thing; for, look we into the Motions of State, domestick or foreign, and the Truth of this will appear. *Saul* is laid aside, and *David* advanced to the Throne; and what is intended in this, see *1 Sam. xv. 28.* with *1 Chron. xiii. 3.* *Cyrus* is advanced; but to what End, the LORD informs, saying, *For Jacob my Servant's Sake, and Israel mine Elect, I have even called thee by Name;* *Isaiah xlv. 4.* and how *Cyrus* did answer this historical Prophecy of himself, see *Ezra i.* where we have the actual History. Again consider, not only historical Passages refering to the Members; but such as refer immediately to *Christ* the Head, and so to the Church. Two Things may be noted here:

(1) THE previous Alteration at that Time when *Christ* came. He was born in the Days of *Herod* the King, *Matt. ii. 1.* Who this *Herod* was, and how the Prophecy of *Jacob, Gen. xlix. 12.* was accomplished, is well known.

(2) THE great Tax imposed by *Augustus*, is another Thing observable. This made Way for *Christ's* Birth at *Bethlehem.* *Augustus* in this Tax pays Tribute to the King of Heaven. He brings Stones to build God's Temple, whilst he intends the raising of his Exchequer. His political Action hath its ecclesiastical Aspect.

3. FROM particular Demonstrations: Political Motions have their References to the People of God divers Ways:

(1) BY Way of Punishment for their Sins. When the Children of the Kingdom wax wanton,

no Wonder if others become Scourges to them. *Moses* prophetically speaks of this; *Jesurun* waxed fat, and kicked: What follows? *I will heap Mischiefs; I will spend mine Arrows upon them: The Sword without, and Terror within, shall destroy both the young Man and the Virgin, the Suckling also, with the Man of grey Hairs.* *Moses* was no false Prophet; the *Israelites* might find how a Prophet had been amongst them, 2 *Kings* xvii. 6, 7. 2 *Chron.* xxxvi. 14, 15, 16, 17. If we look into following Ages, we shall find, that the House had been foul, e're the LORD hath delivered it into the Hands of persecuting ones. Thus *Eusebius* relates: "But after our Affairs through too much Liberty, Ease, and Security, degenerated from the Rule of Piety, and after that one pursued another with open Contumely and Hatred, then Persecution came on." It was wholesome Advice therefore, which *Mr. Bradford* gave to the City of *London*, "Let the Anger and Plagues of GOD, most justly fallen upon us, be applied to every one of our Deserts, that from the Bottom of our Hearts every one of us may say, It is I, LORD, that have sinned against Thee; it is my Hypocrisy, my Vain-glory, my Covetousness, Uncleanliness, Security, Idleness, Unthankfulness, Self-love, which have deserved the taking away our good King, of thy Word, and true Religion, of thy good Ministers, by Exile, Imprisonment, and Death; it is my Wickedness that causeth Success to thine Enemies."

(2) BY Way of Punishment for Injuries offered to the People of GOD: GOD orders some to be Scourges to others who have been Scourges to his People. *Nebuchadnezzar* is the Sword of the LORD against *Egypt*, *Ezek.* xxix. 18, 19, 20. And what *Egypt* was to the House of *Israel*, we have in  
Verse

Verse 6. where it is said, *All the Inhabitants of Egypt shall know that I am the LORD, because they have been a Staff of Reed to the House of Israel.* It is observed how the *Turks* have fallen on, and possessed themselves of such Places, from whence the Protestants have been expelled by the Papists. Bloody *Popery* hath Vengeance belonging to it. The more repeated are the Insolencies and Cruelties of Papists, the greater Ground of Comfort have serious Protestants; and that because the LORD hath his Time to make Inquisition for Blood.

(3) BY Way of Diverſion. GOD doth sometimes fill both the Heads and Hands of Men full with Work, so that they are not at Leisure to persecute his People. *Saul* cannot follow his hunting *David* as a Partridge on the Mountains; there was another Work provided, the *Philistines* had invaded the Land. 1 Sam. xxiii. 27. 1 Sam. xxvi. 20. Both ancient and modern Histories furnish Examples of the like. *Providence* hath thrown in a Bone of Contention, and so there hath been a Diverſion.

1. LEARN hence to take Notice of the Care and Love of GOD towards his People. GOD forgets not the Good of his People in the Commotions that are in the World. Christians under the Cloud see not this, and are ready to say otherwise. *Zion* said, *The LORD hath forsaken me, and my GOD hath forgotten me,* *Isaiah* xlix. 14. But what saith GOD, *Can a Woman forget her sucking Child, that she should not have Compassion on the Son of her Womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will not I forget thee,* Verse 15.

2. LEARN how Divinity will see beyond State Policy. As there are different Motions in the Affairs



fairs of State; so these different Motions have their Correspondency with the different Temper of a People professing Godliness. If Hypocrisy instead of serious Piety, and other Sins, spread as a Gangrene, no Wonder if there are frowning Aspects one Way or other, *Isaiah* x. 6. If there be serious Prayer to GOD, together with Humiliation and Reformation, then He who hath torn will heal; and He who hath smitten, will bind up, *Hos.* vi. 1.

3. GIVE not Way to Fears, Unbelief, and Despondency, in the Midst of all the Tossings of Affairs of the World. Let Persons mind their Duty, and let GOD alone to govern the World. Consider,

(1) ALL the Affairs of the World are subject to *Christ*, who is the Head of the Church. *Eph.* : — Now if *Christ* be the Head, He is not without Eyes, He sees what is to be done; and He is not without Sense, sensible He is what is done in Way of Affront to any of his Members. Though *Christ* in Regard of his bodily Presence, be above the Clouds; yet He hath a Feeling of what is done to the least of his Saints.

(2) THE Christian hath a large Charter of all Things to work for Good, *Rom.* viii. 28. The Church hath a large Jointure; not only the pleasant Vineyards, but the wild Copses of the World, bring in a rich Income to her: All is hers for Good, *1 Cor.* iii. 22. and GOD thinks nothing too good for her. *I am the LORD thy GOD, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour. I gave Egypt for thy Ransom, Ethiopia and Sheba for thee: Since thou wast precious in my Sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: Therefore will I give Men for thee, and People for thy Life, Isaiah* xliii. 3, 4.



## OBSERVATION XV.

PROVIDENCE *outwits the Church's Enemies in their Contrivances against the Church.*

THE Truth of this will appear three Ways:  
 1. From Comparisons in Scripture, the Scope of which are to set forth the *Providence of God*, as baffling Mens Devices against his People. So *Psalms vii. 14, 15, 16. Behold he travelleth with Iniquity, and hath conceived Mischief, and brought forth Falshood: He made a Pit, and is fallen into the Ditch which he made: His Mischief shall return upon his own Head, and his violent Dealing shall come down upon his own Pate.*

2. FROM Examples of such, whose sinful Policy hath proved notorious Folly. *Come on* (saith the King of Egypt) *let us deal wisely with them*, *Exod. i. 10.* That Wisdom was steep'd in the Blood of the *Israelites*; but it had another Kind of Conclusion than was intended. The *Israelites* are multiplied, escape out of *Egypt*, carry away Wealth with them; and the *Egyptian* Prince, with the Armies of *Egypt*, perish in the Red Sea. *Achitophel* is an Oracle for Policy; and yet his Policy recoiling, beats him, with his Wisdom, to the Earth. *Herod* plays the Politician; *Bring me Word* (saith he to the Wisemen) *that I may come and worship Him*, *Matt. ii. 7, 8.* However he is defeated; for the Wisemen are warned of *GOD* in a Dream to the contrary.

3. FROM

3. FROM Demonstrations; and that, (1) In general. (2) In particular.

(1) IN general. Whoso shall place in one Scale God's Wisdom, and in the other the Quintessence of Mens Policies, shall find all the Policies of Men too light to counter-balance infinite Wisdom. True is that of Solomon, *There is no Wisdom, nor Understanding, nor Counsel against the LORD*, Prov. xxi. 30.

(2) IN particular. Let a View be taken, 1. Of the Agents. 2. Of the Way which is taken to accomplish the End intended by Men.

As for the Agents, these are of two Orders: *First*, Principal or primary. *Secondly*, Ministerial or Under-Agents; and each of these fall under Consideration.

*First*, THE principal or primary Agents have often *Providence* so counter working them, that there is a Suspension of Action: What is propounded, is as it were Thunder-struck, and the Plot stumbles at the Threshold: This comes to pass divers Ways,

1. BY the Interposition of some one or other, who is amongst them. An Instance of this, we have in *John vii*. An Assembly there is of the Chief Priests and Pharisees, Verse 45. *Nicodemus* interposeth, saying, *Doth our Law judge any Man before it hear him, and know what he doth?* Verse 51. *Nicodemus* hath a Check given, Verse 52. Yet the Assembly is broken up; *every Man went to his own House*, Verse 53.

2. BY Means of some calming Counsel dropt by one or other, who is of the same Mind with the Parties themselves. Principles of Humanity are not banished from all; and these check bloody Conclusions. So *Gamaliel* stopt the Process from coming forth against the Disciples: Whatever Principles *Gamaliel* acted from, the Issue of his Speech is plain, for *to him they agreed*, Acts v. 40. It may be observed, how some of the Heathens have interceded for the Christians, and so there hath been a Stop put to Persecution.

3. BY Reason of a sharp Contest amongst the Parties themselves. *This Man* (it was said by some) *is not of God, because He keepeth not the Sabbath Day*; others said, *How can a Man that is a Sinner, do such Miracles?* And there was a Division amongst them, John ix. 16. So a Bone of Contention is thrown amongst the Pharisees and Sadduces: *There arose a Dissention between the Pharisees and Sadduces; and the Multitude was divided*, Acts xxiii. 6, 7.

4. BY Means of Mens own Fears. Some would be more mischievous; but they fear the Event. *Herod* holds his Hands from slaying the *Baptist* for a while; *he feared the Multitude, because they counted Him as a Prophet*, Matt. xiv. 5. The Chief Priests and Pharisees storm at *Christ's* Sermon; but when they sought to lay Hands on Him, they feared the Multitude, because they took Him for a Prophet, Matt. xxi. 45, 46.

5. BY Reason of some Diversion, their Hands being full of other Work. That Instance of the *Philistines* invading the Land, by Means whereof *Saul* was diverted from the Pursuit of *David*, is full Proof, 1 Sam. xxiii. 27, 28. The Protestants



in Germany had a Writ of Ease, by Reason of the Turks finding Work for the Emperor.

6. BY the Death of Persons. Here the Action falls to the Ground with the Person. Death concludes Mens Projects and Designs. *In that very Day his Thoughts perish*, Psalm cxlvi. 4. The Angel tells Joseph, *They are dead which sought the Child's Life*, Matt. ii. 20.

7. BY Means of some other Course which Providence takes, when it doth not take away the chief Agents by Death. Thus GOD works a wonderful Change on Persons. The Heathen Fury had a Stop put to it, by Constantine becoming a Christian. Nebuchadnezzar's Frowns are turned into Smiles on Shadrach, Mesbech, and Abed-nego, Dan. iii.

Secondly, As to ministerial Agents, or Under-Agents, which are as Hands employed to Mischief; they become harmless divers Ways,

1. BY implanting Grace in their Hearts. He who becomes a Man of other Principles, is a Man of other Conclusions. He sees enough of his former Course of Life, and so will not do as formerly. Paul lets fall his Commission against the Disciples at Damascus, and so the Expectations of the High Priest at Jerusalem vanish.

2. By a Conviction upon the Conscience, tho' it end not in Conversion. So probably John vii. 45, 46. *Then came the Officers to the Chief Priests and Pharisees, and they said to them, Why have ye not brought him? The Officers answered, Never Man spake like this Man.*

3. By some external baffling *Providence*, which puts by the Design intended. The King of *Syria* sent to *Dotban* Horses, and Chariots, and a great Host, and all this is done to seize on *Elisha*; and yet their Work is not done, as the Story at large is recorded, 2 *Kings* vi.

4. By drawing forth the Affections of Persons. *Saul* was politick in bestowing his Daughter on *David*, that she might be a Snare unto him, 1 *Sam.* xviii. 21. But this Device of his takes not; for she deceives the Deceiver: Her Love to *David* is seen when the Messengers of Death were sent for him, 1 *Sam.* xix. 11.

5. By the Deaths of such as are employed. They who envy others their Lives, may quickly lose their own. *Providence* can soon provide Graves for those whose Throats are open Sepulchres against God's Servants. That surly Captain with his Fifty, and the second with his, experienced this: Their Words were stout against the Prophet, *Thou Man of God, the King hath said, Come down*, saith the first. *O Man of God, thus hath the King said, Come down quickly*, said the other; and instead of the Prophet's coming down, Fire came down, and consumed them and their Fifties.

6. By some extraordinary Display of *Providence*, where Death doth not intercept the Under-Agent. *Balaam* is sent to curse *Israel*; he brake not his Neck by the Way; on he goes, but the Work is not done; an over-ruling Hand of *Providence* is seen, as *Numb.* xxiv. 10. *And Balak's Anger was kindled against Balaam, and he smote his Hands together: And Balak said unto Balaam, I called thee to curse mine Enemies, and behold thou hast altogether blessed them these three Times.* And thus for the ministerial

ministerial Agents, how they become vain in their Attempts.

(2) IN the next Place, The Way, or Means, in order to the End, is to be spoken to: And this may be considered divers Ways,

1. AS absurd, and improper to bring about the End. The Action is like that of the Men, who are said to make an Hedge to keep in the Owl, and to seek for a River to drown the Eel in. Mens unruly Passions are Inlets of Folly: A Mist is raised by these, and so they see not their Way. There is a judicial Infatuation. *The wise Man's Eyes are in his Head; but the Fool walketh in Darkness,* Eccles. ii. 14. *Surely the Princes of Zoan are Fools; the Counsel of the wise Counsellors is become brutish—* Isaiah xix. 11.

2. IF the Means pitch'd on be fit to bring about the End, then a Display of Providence there is, in that the Means are not closed with. Thus the Counsel of Abithophel takes not with Absalom, 2 Sam. xvii. 14. *Absalom, and all the Men of Israel, said, The Counsel of Hushai the Archite, is better than the Counsel of Ahithophel: For the LORD had appointed to defeat the good Counsel of Ahithophel, to the Intent that the LORD might bring Evil upon Absalom.*

3. THOUGH the Means be liked, yet all is dashed by some Discovery made, and that by Means extraordinary or ordinary. The King of Syria's Design where he would have his Camp, is discovered by the Prophet to the King of Israel, who saved himself thence not once, nor twice, 2 Kings vi. 9, 10. *Nehemiah perceived that God had not sent Shemaiah, but that Tobiah and Sanballat* had

had hired him, *Neh. vi. 12, 13.* Black Designs are unmasked by *Providence*: So the Powder-plot in King *James's* Days. Let the Man at *Rome* canonize the Under-Agents for Saints, the Scripture will evidence them to be Sinners.

4. SUPPOSE the Means fail not by Reason of Discovery; yet they are marred in the Manner of using. Men make more Haste than good Speed. *The Counsel of the Froward is carried headlong, Job v. 13.* Mens Counsels are carried headlong, when they go too fast forward, and make so much Haste on, that they tire, and are out of Breath, or stumble, or break themselves, before they attain their Journey's End.

5. IF Men miscarry not with their Design in the Manner of managing it; yet they hit not the Season for effecting it. *Saul's* Messengers come with their Net to catch *David*, but the Bird was fled, *1 Sam. xix. 12, 14.*

6. IF there be a seasonable Application of Means, according to human Apprehension; yet the End is not attained, by Reason of some Check given at the Time. *Man knoweth not that which shall be; for who can tell him when it shall be? Eccl. viii. 7.* *Cesar Borgias*, who thought to manage all to his own Interest on his Father's Death, little thought of his own Sicknes at that very Time, whereby all his other politick Provision availed nothing. It is worthy of Observation, how there is a Check given at the Nick of the intended Application of Means, and that sometimes by some single Emergency, sometimes by a Throng of Occurrences. GOD will be known to be supreme; Man appoints, and the LORD disappoints.



7. SUPPOSE the Application of Means are not thus checked; yet how is all over-ruled, and hath another Issue than was intended? Here we may consider the Issue of the Application of the Means, two Ways: (1) In Respect of Believers. (2) In Respect of Sinners.

(1) IN Respect of those who are aimed at by wicked ones. The worst that wicked Men can do, is ordered for the best. *Schemi's* Lying and Reproaches; yea, the drunken Drollery of others in *David's* Days, shall do *David* Good, 2 *Sam.* xvi. and *Psalms* lxxix. 12, 13. There was a Court Project to cast *Daniel* into the Den of Lions; the King was circumvented: No Help for *Daniel*, but from GOD: The Plot which took, was broken by its Success. Had not *Daniel* been thrown in, what had become of those signal Dispensations of Providence towards *Daniel*? And suppose the Plot of these Courtiers, as to the End of it, the Ruin of *Daniel*, had taken; yet *Daniel* had been no Loser to die for his GOD; they had (no Thanks to their Pride, Envy, Murder) been Instruments for promoting *Daniel* in an higher Court than that of *Darius*: For blessed are they which die in the LORD, from henceforth, yea saith the Spirit, they rest from their Labours, and their Works follow them, Rev. xiv. 13.

(2) IN Respect of the Sinners themselves; and so what they have done, is a Foundation for checking what they after attempt to do another Way. Thus the Hedge of Thorns may become (through an over-ruling Providence) a good Fence to the Bed of Roses. GOD is wise, who makes the Earth, even that which brings forth Briars and Thorns, to help his People.

AGAIN,

AGAIN, What Men afterwards do, lays Foundation for Confusion and Vexation, in Reference to what they have done. They may be said to dance in a Net: The Chief Priests and Pharisees come to *Pilate*, and desire the Sepulchre be made sure, lest *Christ's* Disciples come by Night, steal Him away, and say unto the People, *He is risen from the Dead; and so the last Error should be worse than the first*, Matt. xxvii. 62, 63, 64. But what is the Issue? *Christ* riseth, to the Terror of the Keepers, Shame of the Priests, and the Consolation of the Disciples.

LASTLY, What Men do to ruin God's People, ends often in the Ruin of them and theirs. That Day in which the Enemies of the *Jews* hoped to have Power over them, was turned to the contrary; so that the *Jews* had Rule over them that hated them, *Ester* ix. 1. The bloody Massacre at *Paris* was paid Home with Blood for Blood: For *Coffin*, the Field Marshal, with Twenty Thousand, is slain at the *Rochele* Siege. *Charles* the Ninth wallowed in his own Blood, which issued out of all Parts of his Body: The Duke of *Guise* was murdered in the King's own Chamber: The Duke of *Anjou*, who succeeded his Brother *Charles* the Ninth, was stabbed by a Monk; and the Queen-Mother with Grief broke her Heart.

I. LEARN hence, what Folly it is for Men to set their Wits on Work against the LORD's People. Surely there is no Incantment against Jacob, neither is there any Divination against Israel, *Numb.* xxiii. 23. It were well then, if they who go on in the Way of *Balaam*, the thick Clay Way of worldly Interest, would seriously consider, *Jude* 11. *Woe unto them, for they have gone in the Way of Cain,*  
and

*and ran greedily after the Error of Balaam, for Reward, and perished in the Gain-saying of Core.*

2. THERE is no Reason for those who truly fear GOD, to be disquieted, though Sinners set their Heads together, and dig as deep as Hell for their Plots against the Church of GOD. Two Things here are worthy of Consideration:

1. A BELIEVER shall do more by his plain Prayer to GOD, than a Sinner by his intricate Policy. O LORD, I pray Thee (said David) turn the Counsel of Ahithophel into Foolishness, 2 Sam. xv. 31. David by a short Petition to GOD, prays a wise Man into a Fool.

2. THERE is a notable Description of Providence in Regard of the Devices of Men against the Church. *He that sitteth in the Heavens, shall laugh: The LORD shall have them in Derision, Psalm ii. 4.* This Laughter, after the Manner of Men, is attributed to GOD. It may point at three Things:

1. SEDATENESS or Tranquillity. GOD is not affected in the least, by Way of Perturbation, with the Devices and politick Contrivances of Men. An Army of expert Soldiers is not moved to behold a Company of Children making towards them with Reeds in their Hands. They therefore who have composed Spirits, when wicked ones are busy in their Cobweb Work, the more resemble Him who sits in the Heavens, and laughs.

2. FACILITY to dash their Designs. A wise Man, who laughs at the Project of an Adversary, seeth the Vanity of the Project: He needeth not enter into a deep Contemplation how to counter-work so shallow an Invention.

3. PER-

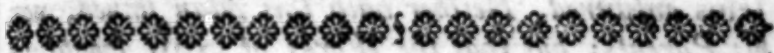
3. PERSPICACITY, or Insight into the Case of the Snarers snared in the very Course they take. A wise Man, who sees in some Measure the End of Business at the Beginning of it, well may laugh when the Adversary shall make a Rod for his own Back: The LORD gives Sinners Line, and so they are entangled to their own Sorrow: Thus He that sitteth in the Heavens laughs: There is no Reason for them who have the LORD of Heaven for theirs, to weep, unless it be for sinning against the LORD.

A NOTABLE Story, for the Illustration of this, may be set down from the learned and pious Bishop *Usher*; whose Uncle, telling the Story (but not knowing the Person) at *Christ's Church* in *Oxford*, at the Table there, a Gentleman blushed, and confessed himself to be the Man.

“ ABOUT the Third of the Reign of Queen  
 “ *Mary*, a Pursevant was sent with a Commission  
 “ into *Ireland*, to impower some eminent Persons  
 “ to proceed with Fire and Faggot against the  
 “ Protestants: It happened, by *Divine Providence*,  
 “ this Pursevant at *Chester* lodged in the House of  
 “ a Protestant Innkeeper, who having got some  
 “ Intimation of the Matter, secretly stole his  
 “ Commission out of his Cloak-bag, and put the  
 “ Knave of Clubs in the Room thereof. Some  
 “ Weeks after he appeared before the Lords of  
 “ the Privy Council at *Dublin*, and produced a  
 “ Card for his pretended Commission: They  
 “ caused him to be committed to Prison for such  
 “ an Affront: Here he lay for some Months, ’till  
 “ with much ado at last he got his Enlargement:  
 “ Then he returned to *England*, and quickly get-  
 “ ting his Commission renewed, makes with all  
 “ Speed



"Speed to *Ireland* again; but before his Arrival  
 "there, he was prevented with the News of  
 "Queen *Mary's* Death."



## OBSERVATION XVI.

PROVIDENCE hath various Aspects in the  
 same Matters.

IN *Ezek. i.* every one of the living Creatures  
 had four Faces; and the Wheels are said to be  
 full of Eyes, Verse 18. What may these Pas-  
 sages import, but probably the manifold Aspects  
 of Providence? The Truth of the Observation may  
 be shewn,

1. BY Examples. That Providence in the Bre-  
 thren's going down to *Egypt*, had its various As-  
 pects; it looked backward on their Guilt, for that  
 is brought to Remembrance, *Gen. xlii. 21.* and it  
 looked forward to their Preservation in the Time  
 of Famine, *Gen. xlv. 7.* The slaying of *Saul* by  
 the *Philistines*, respects not only *Saul's* Punishment,  
 but the Exaltation of *David*. The Wisemen  
 came from the East; that Journey of theirs, re-  
 spected their own Good, the alarming the *Jews*,  
 the Confirmation of *Joseph* and *Mary's* Faith.

2. THE Aspects of Providence may be diversified  
 or branched divers Ways.

1. THE Aspect of Providence sometimes looks  
 upward after a more signal Sort, and not so much  
 down-

downward on the Party, the Subject of the Dispensation: So in the Man who was blind from his Birth; *Master*, (say the Disciples) *who did sin, this Man, or his Parents, that he was born blind?* Jesus answered, *Neither hath this Man sinned, nor his Parents; but that the Works of GOD should be made manifest in him*, John ix. 1, 2, 3. The Blindness of this Man was an afflictive Evil both to the Man and his Parents: It cannot then be said, *Providence* did overlook Sin, and the Affliction of Son and Parents absolutely; its Aspect there is downward in a Sense, but more signally another Way, viz. that by *Christ*, in the blind Man, the Work of GOD might be declared.

2. THE Face of *Providence* looks on others as well as those who are the immediate Subjects of it: And this,

(1) BY Way of Caution, to take Heed of Sin: They in *Jeremiah's* Time are willed to note the *Shiloh Providence*: *But go ye now unto my Place which was in Shiloh, and see what I did to it for the Wickedness of my People Israel*, Jer. vii. 12.

(2) BY Way of Imitation: *Job's* Trials may teach others, who have little of *Job's* Afflictions, and less of his Patience: GOD did set him up as a stately Monument for the Display of Grace to the Ages to come.

(3) BY Way of particular Encouragement to look up to GOD, and wait on Him for Help, and that because of the Intervention of special *Providence*; which though in the first Place it falls on one, yet reacheth another's Case: A clear Instance we have in *Mark* v. where *Jarius* besought *Christ* for his Daughter at the Point of Death, Verse 23.

By

By the Way a Stop is made; an intervening *Providence* there is, in the Cure of the Woman which had an Issue of Blood twelve Years, Verse 25 to 34. Now this *Providence* in the Cure of the Woman, may serve for the Cure of *Jarius's* Faith: *Christ* saith to him, *Be not afraid, only believe*, Verse 36. *Christ* here, like the Husbandman, neglects not the Vine, whilst He goes aside to seek a Prop for its Support.

3. THE Aspect of *Providence* is sometimes frowning, but after a different Sort: There is the Brow of Displeasure, but different, as it respects Slaves and Children in the Family: So in that overflowing Scourge *Isaiah* speaks of, *Isaiah* xxviii. Some shall be trodden down by it; others have Ground and Direction for Support; they may eye *Christ* who was to come, and so conclude there would not be an utter Extirpation of the Nation.

4. THE Face of *Providence* looks sometimes on what is past, present, and to come: *Nebuchadnezzar's* Expulsion from the Royal Seat, looks back on the prophetic Vision interpreted by *Daniel*, Chap. iv. 25. *While the Word was in the King's Mouth, there fell a Voice from Heaven*, Verse 31. *The same Hour was the Thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar*: And this being driven from Men, looks forward, inasmuch as his Pride being corrected, he is restored to his Power and Dignity.

5. THE Aspect of *Providence* may be considered as primary and secondary. There is a primary Errand which *Providence* hath to a Man under this or that Dispensation; as he who goes to a Prince's Court, intends principally the Sight of the Prince, and yet beholds others there. Sometimes an affective Dispensation may be primarily, by Way

of Punishment of some special Sin; and secondarily, by Way of Trial, or Exercise of Grace. Thus in *David's* Case, *Absalom's* Pranks are the Remembrancers of *David's* Folly in the Matter of *Uriah*, see 2 *Sam.* xii. At other Times *Providence* may principally respect the Trial of Grace, and not some signal Guilt foregoing: So in *Job's* Case, *Providence* might cast an Eye on the Sins of his Youth, as that Passage *Job* xiii. 26. may import; and yet it might primarily intend the Graces of his riper Years; for we read of *Job's* Piety and Circumspection, before the Devil was let loose on him; and likewise the LORD's Approbation of him: And nothing doth *Satan* charge against *Job*, but a falsely supposed Guilt of Selfishness in serving God.

1. WHAT Stupidity and Inadvertency is then in the World! *Providence*, like the Sun, scatters its Beams, and few they are that see them: Most Persons, if they see any Thing, it is like that Man in *Mark* viii. 24. *I see Men like Trees walking*: Men have often general and confused Apprehensions of a frowning Aspect of *Providence*; it is for our Sins, say they, that this or that Judgment is: Here is a Stop; they are not by a frowning *Providence* frown'd into an holy Loathing of such Sins: The Aspects of *Providence* are little seen, and less improved: *Israel doth not know, my People doth not consider*, *Isaiah* i. 3.

2. LABOUR to be versed in the Aspects of *Providence*: For Want of an holy Dexterity this Way, a Man wrongs GOD, others, and himself: He tastens that on GOD, which the LORD approveth not, and is injurious to others and himself, as others and himself are concerned in the wrong Conclusions drawn from the Aspects of *Providence*:

Here



Here some Directions might be insisted on; I shall touch on a few.

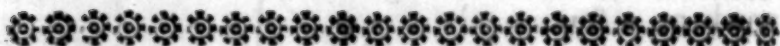
1. CONSIDER how a benign Aspect may be a frowning one: The Prosperity of a Sinner, is his Misery; and the Adversity of a Saint, is his Mercy. *A brutish Man knoweth not, neither doth a Fool understand this; when the Wicked spring as the Grass, and when all the Workers of Iniquity flourish; it is that they shall be destroyed evermore, Psalm xcii. 6, 7.*

2. BE not too hasty in passing a Judgment on an Aspect of Providence: The Barbarians censure Paul for a Murderer, because Vengeance in its frowning Aspect pursues him; but when Paul shook off the Beast into the Fire, and felt no Harm, they changed their Minds.

3. REMEMBER, how the Aspects of Providence have a different Consideration: Sometimes a Providence respects the Person, but not the Action: So in Abraham's Case; GOD preserves his Wife, which was like to be defiled in Abimelech's Court: GOD had a Respect to Abraham, as he was Abraham the Saint, Abraham the Prophet; not Abraham the Distruster of Providence. The Aspect of Providence doth not countenance Abraham's Miscarriage in that Business.

AGAIN, Providence may respect the Substance of the Action, not the Circumstances, or Irregularity coupled with it.





## OBSERVATION XVII.

PROVIDENCE *bath* its Harmonies.

**T**HOUGH *Providence* seems to sound Discords; yet it hath Correspondencies with, 1. The Sacred Scriptures. 2. With the Prayers of Saints. 3. With itself.

*First*, THERE is an Harmony of *Providence* with the Sacred Scriptures. It is said, *Amos* iii. 3. *Can two walk together except they be agreed?* The Scripture and *Providence* walk together; they are agreed in the Journey's End, where to meet, altho' one of them may seem to leave the Company of the other for some Time. *Providence*, in Regard of its Correspondency with the Word, may be termed a visible Bible, or a Commentary on it. *Providence* passeth not by any Thing as inconsiderable in the Word. In *Isaiah* xxxiv. there is Mention made of the Cormorant, Bittern, Owl, Raven, Vultures, and all these as Tokens of Desolation, Verses 11, 12, 13, 14, 15. Observe what follows: *Seek ye out the Book of the LORD, and read: None of these shall fail; none shall want her Mate: For my Mouth it hath commanded, and his Spirit it hath gathered them.*

MORE particularly, the Word may be considered,

1. By Way of Prediction, or fore-telling Matters precisely.

2. By

2. BY Way of Assertion: Instances frequently occur in the *Proverbs of Solomon*, referring to the Righteous and the Wicked.

3. BY Way of Threatning.

4. BY Way of Promise.

ACCORDING to all these Considerations *Providence* doth harmonize: Let the Word be understood right, and *Providence* will not be found wrong. The Word and *Providence* are like two Sticks in the Water, which seem crooked by Reason of the Medium. GOD will not be wanting in his *Providence*, to maintain the Reputation of his Word: Yea, the Harmony of *Providence* is so audible, that a Pagan Ear can discern it. *The Captain of the Guard took Jeremiah, and said unto him, The LORD thy GOD hath pronounced this Evil upon this Place: Now the LORD hath brought it, and done according as He hath said, Jer. xl. 2, 3.*

Secondly, THERE is an Harmony of *Providence* with the Prayers of Saints: So 1 *John* v. 14. *And this is the Confidence we have in Him, that if we ask any Thing according to his Will, He heareth us.* There are many Examples of this both in the Old and New Testament. So *Elias* prayed earnestly that it might not rain, and it rained not on the Earth by the Space of three Years and six Months: And he prayed again, and the Heaven gave Rain, and the Earth brought forth her Fruit, *James* v. 17, 18.

Thirdly, THERE is an Harmony of *Providence* with itself. *Providence*, for the main, is the same in all Ages. There is a substantial Harmony of *Providence* with *Providence*; otherwise, to what End are the Dispensations of GOD in former Ages,

commended to the serious Meditation of After-Ages? Now these Things (saith St. Paul) were our Examples, to the Intent, we should not lust after evil Things, as they also lusted: Neither be ye Idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, the People sat down to eat, and to drink, and rose up to play: Neither let us commit Fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one Day three and twenty Thousand: Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of Serpents: Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the Destroyer. Now all these Things happened unto them for Ensamples; and they are written for our Admonition upon whom the Ends of the World are come, 1 Cor. x. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10.

WHAT a Folly is it then for Persons to busy themselves about other pretended Harmonies? If there be such Bread in the Father's House, what have Children to do with Husks? There are a Sort of Bastard Harmonies cried up, which want Scripture Authority.

I. THERE is the pretended Harmony of Things with Astrological Predictions, which are not founded on right Reason, or Experience. There is little Reason for Men to be curiously searching after Almanacks, and this to the Neglect of their Bibles. If Men would search into the latter, as they do into the former, they might read of *Esau* and *Jacob*, Twin-born, but of a different Character, Gen. xxv. 23. They might read of many Thousands dying a violent Death nigh one and the same Time, *Judges*. viii. 10. and if an Astrologer had been consulted, is it likely that he had made such a Difference as to *Esau* and *Jacob*, and such an Harmony of the Deaths of an hundred and twenty Thousand, as the last Scripture mentions? Again, they might read,



read, that *Promotion cometh neither from the East, nor from the West, nor from the South*, Ps. lxxv. 6. Furthermore, they might read a sacred Irony, *Let now the Astrologers, the Star-gazers, the monthly Prognosticators, stand up, and save thee from the Things that shall come upon thee*, Isaiah xlvii. 13. Lastly, they might hear, *Thus saith the LORD, Learn not the Way of the Heathen, and be not dismayed at the Signs of Heaven, for the Heathens are dismayed at them*, Jer. x. 2.

2. THERE is another Bastard Harmony in Regard of blind Prophecies cast forth from Wizards and Witches, the Oracles of the Devil. There is in some a wicked Curiosity to know their Fortune, as it is phrased: If such would know their Fortune, they might take a shorter Course by reading the 28th Chapter of *Deuteronomy*; or, if they like not so large a Discourse, they may have it in short from *Christ*, who tells them, *He that believeth not, shall be damned*, Mark xvi. 16.

PERHAPS it will be objected, That Prophecies (so termed) fall out true; and therefore why are they not to be looked after?

I ANSWER, 1. It is no Wonder if sometimes that which is spoken (and yet it may be in an ambiguous Sense) fall out: Suppose divers in *Israel* had had Recourse to Witches, to enquire what Weather should have been on the Morrow, when *Samuel* said, *Is it not Wheat-Harvest To-day? I will call unto the LORD, and He shall send Thunder and Rain*, 1 Sam. xii. 17. Perhaps, none had hit right: Suppose one had amongst many; this one speaks the Truth, but not truly; having no Ground but as the blind Man shoots the Hare.

2. SOME

2. SOME Kind of Predictions may have some Influence to bring about what is said. A true Prophecy may have some Influence in an ordinary Way to further the Accomplishment of itself: So 2 Kings ix. the Prophecy there was the Occasion for the Army to set up *Jehu*: And so, on the other Hand, some Passages may lead to the Thing. A Man hath a strong Conceit of Death, he is foretold so; and this Fancy may, through *Providence*, have its deadly Operation.

3. SATAN can give notable Intelligence to some who are his Oracles: For,

(1) HE is an Angel, and so hath a deep Insight into Matters.

(2) HE hath had long Experience as to Matters in the World: He is an old Serpent, *Rev. xii. 9.*

(3) HE can quickly take Cognizance how Things are in their Causes both natural and moral.

(4) THE Devil hath a great Stroke in Matters brought about in the World: *Satan* could know what would befall *Abab* and *Job*, when he had a Commission what to do.

(5) GOD hath wise Ends in the Verification of what is sometimes foretold: That Place in *Deut. xiii. 1, 2, 3.* is full for this Purpose. *Providence* forbears not to go the Journey, because *Satan* doth so probably guess, and give it out; yea, *Providence* sets forward the rather for the Trial of Persons: And therefore let that pertinent Instruction be remembered, *Isaiab viii. 19, 20.* And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar Spirits, and unto Wizards: Should not a People seek unto

unto their GOD? To the Law, and to the Testimony; if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no Light in them.



## OBSERVATION XVIII.

*There is a Retaliating Work observable in GOD's dealing with Men.*

**T**HIS Retaliating Work of Providence may be considered both by Way of Frown and Smile, gracious in a Way of Favour. The same Bread which Men break to others, is broken to them again. GOD doth sometimes pay Persons in the like Coin; sometimes the Payment is made in Bullion, which tho' it have not the same Image or Supercription on it, yet it comes out of the same Mine. There is a general Accord with what preceded. For the further clearing of which we may consider,

*First, THERE are Assertions in Scripture to this Effect. These Assertions are either General, or Particular.*

**I. GENERAL.** And here, not to be large, hear what Christ Himself asserteth: Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: Condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven: Give, and it shall be given unto you, good Measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall Men give into your Bosom; for with the same Measure

*Measure that ye mete withal, it shall be measured to you again.*

2. THERE are particular Assertions, pointing either at frowning Dispensations or smiling ones. The first we have scattered up and down in Scripture: So *Isaiah xxxiii. 1. Woe to thee that spoilest, and thou wast not spoiled; and dealt treacherously, and they dealt not treacherously with thee: When thou shalt cease to spoil, thou shalt be spoiled; and when thou shalt make an End to deal treacherously, they shall deal treacherously with thee.* Rev. xiii. 10. *He that leadeth into Captivity, shall go into Captivity; he that killeth with the Sword, must be killed with the Sword.*

THE latter Sort of Assertions we have likewise on Record: So *Psalms xli. 1, 2, 3. Blessed is he that considereth the Poor, the LORD will deliver him in Time of Trouble; the LORD will preserve him, and keep him alive, and he shall be blessed upon the Earth, and Thou wilt not deliver him to the Will of his Enemies: The LORD will strengthen him upon the Bed of Languishing; Thou wilt make his Bed in Sicknes.* Matt. v. 7. *Blessed are the Merciful, for they shall obtain Mercy.*

Secondly, THE Prayers in Scripture imply a Retaliating Work of Providence: These Reflections have reached Heaven for an Answer: So *Psalms cxxxvii. 7. Remember, O LORD, the Children of Edom, in the Day of Jerusalem; who said, Raze it, raze it, even to the Foundation thereof.* So likewise, *Lam. i. 22. Let all their Wickedness come before Thee; and do unto them as Thou hast done unto me for all my Transgressions.* And Rev. vi. 10. *And they cried with a loud Voice, saying, How long, O LORD, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our Blood on them that dwell on the Earth.*

AGAIN,



AGAIN, There are Passages in Prayer of another Aspect. Boaz answered and said to Ruth, *It hath been fully shewed me, all that thou hast done unto thy Mother-in-Law since the Death of thy Husband; and how thou hast left thy Father, and thy Mother, and the Land of thy Nativity, and art come to a People which thou knewest not heretofore. The LORD recompense thy Work; and a full Reward be given thee of the LORD GOD of Israel, under whose Wings thou art come to rest,* Ruth ii. 11, 12. The LORD (said Paul) *give Mercy unto the House of Onesiphorus, for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my Chain,* 2 Tim. i. 16.

Thirdly, THERE are Examples of a Retaliating Work; and that, 1. By Way of Wrath. 2. By Way of Mercy.

1. To begin with the first Sort: The First-born of Egypt were slain, according to the bloody Edict for the destroying the Children of the Israelites; and as Orders were issued out to drown the Children of the Israelites in Egypt's River, so Pharaoh with his Host are drowned in the Red Sea, *Exod. i. 16, 22. with Exod. xii. 29. and Exod. xiv. 30.* Samuel tells Agag, *As thy Sword hath made Women childless, so shall thy Mother be childless among Women,* 1 Sam. xv. 33. Vengeance is for Edom; and why? Because Edom hath dealt against the House of Judah, *Ezek. xxv. 12, 13, 14.* O Jerusalem, (said Christ) *which killest the Prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee—behold now your House is left unto you desolate,* Luke xiii. 34, 35. It is said, *Rev. xvi. 6. For they have shed the Blood of Saints and Prophets, and thou hast given them Blood to drink, for they are worthy. And Rev. xviii. 6. Reward her, even as she rewarded you; and double unto her double, according to her Works; in the Cup which*

which she hath filled, fill to her double. Many Instances are there in civil and ecclesiastical History, which abundantly witness this: The Sins of Fraud, Perjury, Oppression, Blood, are written in capital Characters on the Foreheads of the Punishments.

THE next Sort of Examples come to be spoken to. The Midwives, who would not pull down the Props of the *Israelitish* Houses, (I mean, the Male Children) have Houses made for them, *Exod. i. 21.* GOD's making them Houses may be understood in Regard of the Increase of Posterity; or in Regard of Honour, their Houses or Families are made illustrious; they who honoured GOD, and his People, in an afflicted Condition, are honoured by GOD; or lastly in Regard of Wealth, they are blest with a Confluence of good Things, who would not be instrumental to rob the *Israelites*. *Lot* shews Kindness to Angels, in the Shape of Men; and he who would defend his Guests, is defended by them, *Gen. xix. 1, &c.*

THERE are Examples of the same Truth in History. *Frescobalt*, a Merchant of *Florence*, was very bountiful to *Cromwell*, after Lord High Chancellor of *England*, and found the Recompence of his Bounty in *Florence*, at *London*; for coming thither to get in some Monies due to him in *England*, being now in low Estate, he finds one high enough for his Help and Relief: By the Assistance of the Chancellor, his Debts are paid; and the Money which this Merchant gave, or rather lent to the other, being in a mean Condition, is refunded with noble Interest, viz. Eight Hundred Ducats for Fifty, disbursed in order to *Cromwell's* Return to *England*. In the Life of that famous Preacher *Lavater*, there is a memorable Story of his Father: He being in the War, had Compassion on a common

mon Soldier labouring under great Extremity by Reason of Thirst; though he were an Officer, yet he took Cognizance of a distressed Soldier, and refreshed him with a Draught of Wine; eight Years after, *Lavater* in a Fight falls into a Ditch where many had perished, neither was there any Hope that he should get out, when that very Soldier put forth his Hand in the Sight of the Enemies, with great Danger of his Life, and plucks *Lavater* from the Jaws of Death. In the Life of *Junius*, it is mentioned, that being at a great Distance from his Friends, and War breaking forth in *France*, so that he could not have Monies sent him, he was in very great Want, so that he was resolved to dig for a Livelihood in the City Trench of *Geneva*: Being thus distressed, one *William Burdo*, a Taylor, having been out in the Civil Wars, and lately escaped with his Life, takes Notice of *Junius*, hath him to his Lodging, telling him he would work for his Subsistence; and this he did, considering what Kindness his Mother (being a Widow Woman, and having many Children) had received from *Junius's* Mother. Who knows to whom he may be beholden one Time or other! Acts of Charity are Bills of Exchange, when no Money is in the Purse. *He that hath Pity on the Poor, lendeth unto the LORD; and that which he hath given, will He pay him again, Prov. xix. 17.*

*First*, IN Reference then to Frowning Retaliations of Providence, observe,

I. THERE is Ground to repent for Injuries done to others: There may be a sad Reckoning of Providence behind: They who imbitter others Lives, may have their Lives imbittered by others: The King of *Nineveh* with his Nobles act wisely, when it is thus enacted; *Yea, let them turn every one from*

*his evil Way, and from the Violence that is in their Hands, Jonah iii. 8. The Success of Humbling and Reforming is mentioned in the tenth Verse.*

2. ACKNOWLEDGE GOD's righteous Hand, when the Evil of our Sins are written thus on the Foreheads of our Pains. *Adonibezek* feels the righteous Hand of Providence in his Thumbs cut off: *As I have done, so GOD hath requited me, Judges i. 7.*

3. BEWARE of unrighteous Acts towards others, whether Magistrates, Ministers, Parents, Husbands, Wives, Widows, or Fatherless. An aged Man being dragged by the Hair of the Head, desired his Son (who abused him) he would not drag him beyond such a Place of the House, for that he dragged his Father no farther. The People of *Israel* refused to obey the Voice of *Samuel* their Governor, and they smarted for it, *1 Sam. viii. 19.* They who slight good Ministers, may be punished with bad ones: There may be Watchmen which may smite some for their Smiting, and wound for their Wounding, *Cant. v. 7.* That is a notable Caution given, *Exod. xxii. 22, 23, 24. Ye shall not afflict any Widow, or fatherless Child; if thou afflict them in any wise, and they cry at all unto Me, I will surely hear their Cry, and my Wrath shall wax hot, and I will kill you with the Sword, and your Wives shall be Widows, and your Children Fatherless.*

Secondly, IN Reference to Smiling Retaliations of Providence, remember,

1. THE less Ground there is of Dejection under Straits, by how much the more we have been helpful to others under their Straits: *For GOD* (saith the



the Author of the Epistle to the *Hebrews*) is not unrighteous, to forget your *Work and Labour of Love*, which ye have shewed towards his Name, in that ye ministered to the Saints, and do minister, Heb. vi. 10. *Job* was Eyes to the Blind, and Feet to the Lame, a Father to the Poor, the Blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon him, *Job* xxix. He hath Experience after his Winter Season of Retaliating Smiling Providence; his Brethren, Sisters, and all that had been of his Acquaintance, afford him Heart and Hand for his Support.

2. TAKE Notice, how GOD hath been a gracious Pay-master to you one Way or other: The Debts of Kindness are paid off in Money, or as good, if not better than Money: Old *Barzillai*, who had a loyal Heart and a bountiful Hand towards *David* in his Flight from *Absalem*, experienceth the King's Favour to him and his.

3. TAKE Encouragement then, to put on Bowels of Mercy, Kindness, Humbleness of Mind, Meekness, Long-suffering. Forget not, more especially, to have a Respect to GOD's Servants; remembering that of *Christ*, Matt. x. 41. *He that receiveth a Prophet in the Name of a Prophet, shall receive a Prophet's Reward; and he that receiveth a righteous Man in the Name of a righteous Man, shall receive a righteous Man's Reward.*





## OBSERVATION XIX.

*The Circumstances of Time and Place afford weighty Instructions to the Observers of PROVIDENCE.*

**T**O begin with the first of these; it will not be lost Time to take a View of Providence about the Timing of Things. And here three Positions offer themselves.

*First*, IT belongs to GOD, as his Prerogative Royal, to time Matters. *Isaiab lx. 22. I the LORD will hasten it in his Time. Acts i. 7. He said unto them, It is not for you to know the Times and Seasons which the Father hath put in his own Power.*

*Secondly*, THE LORD, who is wise, doth wisely time Matters: This appears, if it be considered,

1. THAT the Scripture not only speaks of Time, but a Fulness of Time; which notes the mature, exact, fit bringing forth of Matters on the Stage of this World: Our Saviour came in the Fulness of Time, as we read once and again, *Gal. iv. 4. and Eph. i. 10.*

2. THERE is no solid Reason for Man to object against the LORD's Timing of Matters. For, (1) Hereby Folly is exalted, *Eccles. vii. 10. Say not thou, What is the Cause that the former Days were better*

*better than these? For thou dost not enquire wisely concerning this.* (2) Men have smarted for their Folly, when they will have Things timed according to their discontented Humours. The *Israelites* must have *Flesh-Days*; they have them, and enough of them, *Numb. xi. 32, 33.*

*Thirdly,* THERE is a glorious Display of Providence in Timing both Mercies and Judgments. Mercies are so timed, as that they are often enhanced from the Season for them: GOD remembered *Joseph*, in the Butler's forgetting him; for *Joseph* is reserved 'till he be more fit for Release, and 'till *Pharaoh* be at a Loss about his Dreams, *Gen. xli. 8.* The like may be observed in *Daniel's* Case; between whose intended Slaughter and Advancement there was but a little Time, *Dan. ii. 13.* Moreover, the Time of Mercy doth sometimes point at some Duty, which the LORD recompenceth at such Time. It is observed, how the *English* had Victory given them on that very Day and Hour that the Images were burnt at *London.* And as for Judgments, the LORD times them: The *Affyrians* go not against an hypocritical Nation, 'till GOD sends them, *Isaiah x. 6.* GOD knows how to make a Calamity a double one, in Regard of the Timing of it. Moreover, the Day of Calamity may point at Sin committed on the Day that Calamity is inflicted. *While the Word was in the King's Mouth, there fell a Voice from Heaven.* Time is sometimes a Glass to behold the Sin committed before, at such a Time as hath its Recourse when the Judgment is inflicted: The Day, Week, Month of Pain, may point to the Day, Week, Month of Sin before.

THE Second Branch of the Observation refers to Places: And here likewise we may consider,

*First*, SOME Places are Monuments of Providence, in Regard of what falls out there. Surely (saith *Jacob*) *the LORD is in this Place, and I knew it not.*

*Secondly*, THERE is much of Providence in going to Places, and in the Absence of Persons from Places. A *Levite* lodgeth at *Gibeah*, *Judges* xix. 15. and what falls out there, is the Desolation of *Benjamin*. *Nathan*, *Sadock*, *Benaiah*, *Solomon*, are not at that seditious Feast of *Adonijah*: *Abiathar*, *Joab*, are; and they had better fasted, as the Sequel of the Story declares, *1 Kings* i.

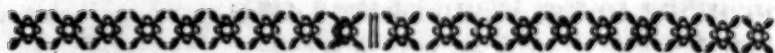
*Thirdly*, BOTH Mercy and Wrath may be read in legible Characters on Places, and at Places. The Providence of GOD is seen in a Way of Mercy, as it respects the Place itself, in blessing it, as He did the Land of *Canaan* to the *Israelites*: And the same Providence is displayed in a Way of Mercy at Places, and that in doing Good to the Bodies and Souls of Men: *Many of the Jews which came to Mary, (at Bethany) and had seen the Things which Jesus did, believed on Him, John* xi. 45. The blind Man is in the Way nigh *Jericho*, and *Christ* passed by, and healeth him, *Luke* xviii. 35. And as Mercy is thus displayed, so Wrath likewise. *The LORD turneth Rivers into a Wilderness, and the Water Springs into dry Grounds, a fruitful Land into Barrenness, for the Wickedness of them that dwell therein, Psalm* cvii. 33, 34. The Brethren of *Ahaziah* are on their Progress to visit *Ahab's* Children at *Samaria*; they are met with by *Jehu*, and slain at the Pit of the Shearing-House, *2 Kings* x. 13, 14. King *Joash* is providentially drawn forth from *Jezreel*, and met *Jehu* in the Portion of *Naboth* the *Jezreelite*, *2 Kings* ix. 21. he is slain by



by *Jehu*, and his Body is thrown on that very Plat, according to the Word of the LORD.

FROM the LORD's Timing of Matters learn,  
 1. What Ground there is for wicked Men to consider their Ways. GOD not only times Punishment, but so times it, as that it may become double Punishment. GOD hath turned the Glass of his Long-suffering in Heaven; how many Sands are run out, and how many are to run out, they know not: This let them know, That GOD will come in the Way of Punishing, if they come not in Way of Repenting; He will come even to a Sand. When the Iniquity of the *Amorites* is full, Vengeance steps in, *Gen. xv. 16.* And as the LORD timeth Wrath, so there is a vengeful Timing of it: Wicked Men have a Spring-Tide of Wrath, when they expected it not: So it was foretold of *Babylon*, *Isaiah xlvii.*  
 9. *These two Things shall come to thee in one Day; the Loss of Children, and Widowhood:* And in Verse  
 11. *Therefore shall Evil come unto thee, thou shalt not know from whence it ariseth; and Mischief shall fall upon thee, thou shalt not be able to put it off; and Desolation shall come upon thee suddenly, which thou shalt not know.*

2. WHAT Ground is there for good Men to wait on GOD for Mercy: GOD hath his Timing of Mercy, and so Timing it, as may the more commend the Mercy: There is a blessed Season to revive the Spirit of the Humble, and to revive the Heart of the Contrite Ones, *Isaiah lvii. 15.* *John's* Disciples came to *Christ* in a seasonable Time, to be strengthened in the Faith of the Messiah: Go and shew *John* (saith *Christ*) *those Things which ye hear and see*, *Matt. xi. 4, 5.* *Christ* knew when to fill *Peter's* Net with Fish, after they had toiled all Night, and caught nothing, *Luke v. 5, 6.*



## OBSERVATION XX.

*Man's Extremity is Heaven's Opportunity.*

**T**HIS will appear, if we consider, 1. Promises: 2. Divine Performances: 3. The Variety of Ends which GOD hath in Matters of this Nature.

*First, PROMISES.* GOD's Promise of bringing the *Israelites* out of *Egypt*, was not the further from fulfilling, though the *Israelites* had been long under the *Egyptian Yoke*; and their Yoke was made heavier a little before the LORD brake it to Pieces: The Promise stood still in its full Strength, when the *Israelites* were weakest; Help was then nearest, when they might think it furthest off: So we read, *Deut. xxxii. 36. The LORD shall judge his People, and repent Himself for his Servants, when He seeth that their Power is gone, and there is none shut up or left.* This extends to Persons or People under heavy Pressures; and the more Persons evidence themselves to be GOD's People, the more they may find the Accomplishment of what is here promised, *Psalms ix. 18. For the Needy shall not alway be forgotten; the Expectation of the Poor shall not perish for ever. Psalm xii. 5. For the Oppression of the Poor, for the Sighing of the Needy, now will I arise, saith the LORD, I will set him in Safety from him that puffeth at him. Psalm lxxii. 12. For He shall deliver the Needy when he crieth, the Poor also, and him that hath no Helper. Zech. xiv. 7. It shall come*

come to pass, that at Evening it shall be light: That is, Mercy shall break forth, when little expected; they shall have a Morning of Mercy, in their Evening of Difficulties.

Secondly, COME we next to Performances, or the Experiences of good Men. GOD remembered Noah after he had been shut up in the Ark, Gen. viii. 1. Lot is rescued timely by Abraham, Gen. xiv. 13. Sarah was taken into the House, Gen. xx. 3. and it is said, GOD came to Abimelech, and said, Behold, thou art but a dead Man, for the Woman which thou hast taken; for she is a Man's Wife. Israel was sore distressed, Judges x. 9. then the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jephthah, and he becomes their Deliverer, Judges xi. 29. The Disciples of Christ were in the Ship, there arose a great Tempest in the Sea, insomuch that the Ship was covered with the Waves; they come to Christ, awake him, saying, LORD save us, we perish: Then He arose, and rebuked the Winds and the Sea, and there was a great Calm, Matt. viii. 24, 25, 26. All these are Instances of seasonable Help from Heaven under Extremities.

Thirdly, THE Variety of Ends which the LORD hath in the Swelling of a Distress, ere He apply the Remedy; is the next Thing to be insisted on: These may be reckoned up as follow:

1. To chasten for Sin: Great Sins call for grievous Distresses: As Men were swift in transgressing, so Providence may justly be slow in delivering: GOD will let Men see by the Punishment, how provoking their Sins have been. Joseph's Brethren envy him, resolve to slay him, sell him to the Ishmaelites; they are after distressed in Egypt, and Conscience then awakes; their Distress riseth higher

higher and higher, for behold their Money is in their Sacks Mouth, and hereupon their Hearts failed them, and they were afraid, saying one to another, *What is this that GOD hath done to us?* Gen. xlii. 28. Neither is this all; a hard Task they have to get *Benjamin* from their Father, in order to the Purgation of themselves from being Spies; and no going again to *Egypt* without him; and if they go not, they must go down to their Graves, for the Famine was sore in the Land: At length *Jacob* is prevailed with to let *Benjamin* go, and then their Distress rises to the Height; the Cup is found in *Benjamin's* Sack, and according to their Verdict *Benjamin* was to die, and they to be Bondmen, Gen. xliv. 9. Now is the Spring-Tide of Distress, which overflows all the Banks, as appears from the pathetick Oration of *Judah*, who vents his Sorrows, saying, *What shall we say unto my Lord? What shall we speak; or how shall we clear ourselves? GOD hath found out the Iniquity of thy Servants: We are my Lord's Bondmen, and he also with whom the Cup is found.* Now Help comes from Heaven: *I am Joseph, (saith Joseph) I am Joseph your Brother, whom ye sold into Egypt.*

2. To take off the Heart from depending on Creatures, and to call forth Faith on GOD. The greater the Distresses are, and no Way for Help, the more there is Place for Faith in GOD. Providence straitens the Conditions of Persons, that there may be more Room for the Exercise of Faith. Faith will find somewhat to take Hold on, when Sense seeth nothing. *I looked (saith the Psalmist) on my Right Hand, and beheld, but there was no Man that would know me; Refuge failed me; no Man cared for my Soul. I cried unto Thee, O LORD; I said, Thou art my Refuge, and my Portion in the Land of the Living,* Psalm cxlii. 4, 5.

3. To



3. To encourage Prayer. The Church of GOD in *Esther's* Time, had, as it were, her Neck on the Block, *Esther* iv. 16. Prayer was made without ceasing for *Peter*, *Acts* xii. 5. and the LORD sends an Angel, who procures a timely Delivery. As GOD doth call forth Prayer in such Extremities (for our Extremities call upon us to call upon GOD); so his Goodness is seen in the Answer made unto Prayer; which may further be a Load-stone to this Duty under the like Extremities. It is said in *Psalms* cii. 17. *He will regard the Prayer of the Destitute, and not despise their Prayer.* I remember here a memorable Story: There was a Famine in a Ship, insomuch that the Question was started about drawing Lots who should be eaten; one in the Ship desired the rest, that they might first seek to GOD by Prayer; and accordingly made a Prayer to GOD, and whilst he was praying, a Fish of some Bigness was cast out of the Sea upon the Place where he was: This they divided; and though it were but a short Commons, yet it put a Stop to the Proposal for that Time; but Hunger comes on, and the old Question is started; the Man who had prayed before wills them, they might look up again to GOD, having had Experience of his gracious Providence; accordingly they go to Prayer, and whilst at Prayer, a Fowl of considerable Bigness flies a-thwart the Ship-tackling, and is entangled: This they caught, and accordingly divided; and before any further Controversy did arise, a Ship appears, and gives them Provision.

4. To render his Wisdom and Power conspicuous, and that not only to the Persons relieved, but to After-Generations.

5. To check the Pride and malicious Resolutions of wicked Men. *Come, say the Babylonians, sing*

us one of the Songs of Sion, Psalm cxxxvii. 3. GOD can in Time let the *Babylonians* know, there are those whom He can make Use of to make the *Babylonians* howl, who now call for singing one of the LORD's Songs: How were *Pharaoh*, *Haman*, *Sennacherib*, check'd in the very Time! And not only in former Times hath Providence been seen in acting thus, but also in later Days. There is a very remarkable Story of *Magdeburgh*, the Citizens whereof, in *Charles* the Fifth's Time, stood out heroically, notwithstanding the Emperor had borne down the Protestants in all *Germany*; only *Magdeburgh* is like the Pelican in the Wilderness, and the Sparrow alone on the House Top; and now in the very Article of Time Prince *Maurice*, who besieged them, wheeled about to be their Friend, and so makes Articles of Peace with them, and with his Army falls upon the Emperor.



## OBSERVATION XXI.

*Hindrances, when and where the LORD so pleaseth, become Furtherances.*

THE Truth of this Assertion is seen, *First*, In Spiritual; *Secondly*, In Temporal Things.

*First*, In Spirituals; and that, 1. In Matters of personal Concernment: 2. In Matters referring to the Church.

1. In Matters of personal Concernment. Thus a Man's own Sins are sometimes a Foundation for Watch-

Watchfulness: A Christian sometimes riseth by his Fall.

2. IN Matters referring to the Church of GOD: For,

(1) THE Mountains of Opposition become Plains. The Church of GOD hath thriven by Oppositions. So attests St. Paul, Phil. i. 12. *The Things which happened unto me, have fallen out rather unto the Furtherance of the Gospel.* The like Tertullian; "As often as we are mowed, we are sowed." The same may be noted in After-Times. It is left on Record, how the Pope's Bull, and the thundering Edict of the Emperor in *Luther's Days*, did rather further than hinder the Gospel.

(2) ERRORS and Heresies with which the Church of GOD is often pestered, are an Occasion; whereby the Truths of GOD shine the more glorious. It is conceived by some, the Occasion of St. John's writing the Gospel, was the Errors broached by *Ebion* and *Cerinthus*; and St. Paul informs us, *There must be also Heresies among you, that they which are approved, may be made manifest among you,* 1 Cor. xi. 19. We had not had such deep Searches into Truths, had not the Spirit of Error possessed the Heads of Men.

(3) APOSTASIES from the Church of *Christ* are Matter of Lamentation; yet the LORD knows how to render these useful to others for their Confirmation in the Ways of GOD. GOD's Judgments on Apostates are a Beacon set on Fire to warn others. What befell *Judas*, (*Matt. xxvii. 5.*) might be of great Use to the Disciples and others at *Jerusalem*. *Arrius* was a Firebrand; but how extinct, when he voided his Bowels, History doth mention.

Secondly, IN Temporals, Hindrances become Furtherances. Instances there are in divers Cases: As,

1. IN Marriage: So a likely Progress was made in *Ruth's* Disposal to the Kinsman; *Boaz* tells of him, and promiseth he will see what will be done, *Ruth* iii. 13, 18. and accordingly *Boaz* meets the Man (who providentially came by) before the Elders of the City; all is broke to Pieces; howbeit this Hindrance is a Furtherance of Marriage with a better Man, even *Boaz* himself.

2. IN Losses: Men may be the better fitted for Prosperity, by sanctified Adversity. The LORD who makes poor to a Wonder, can make rich to a Miracle. The LORD blessed the latter End of *Job* more than the Beginning, *Job* xlii. 12.

3. IN Sicknes; which may make Way for further Health, as GOD is pleased to order it, and sanctify his Dispensation. *Hezekiah* dies not, but hath a Lease of fifteen Years added to his Life, *Isaiah* xxxviii. 5. An improved Sicknes may both physically and morally conduce to Health: A Man learns in Part to be his own Physician, and to glorify GOD more with his Health, than formerly.

4. IN Reproaches: *Joseph* is advanced, and that by them who intended his utter Downfall. False Aspersions often redound to the Glory of the Aspersed, and the Infamy of the Aspersers. *The Lip of Truth shall be established for ever: But a lying Tongue is but for a Moment*, Prov. xii. 19.

5. IN Defeats of Armies. The *Israelites* are smitten by the Men of *Ai*, *Josh.* vii. 5. and their being smitten, is an Inducement to the Men of *Ai*  
to



to be more forward than wise in the Management of their next Battle, *Josh. viii. 16, 17.* It is an experienced Observation, That some lose by their Victories, and others gain by their Defeats.

BEWARE therefore of Anger and Discontent, when some Hindrances in Business steps in. If Persons had more Patience, they might be sensible, how what falls, falls out for Good. The Hindrance may be a Furtherance,

1. IN REGARD of the Thing itself; that Matter in particular may take Place. In GOD's Time, *Joseph* hath such an Advancement as the Dreams did foretell; and that notwithstanding all Essays to the contrary.

2. IN REGARD of a Thing of the same Kind: The Marriage of *Ruth* with the Kinsman is dashed; yet that makes Way for a better Marriage.

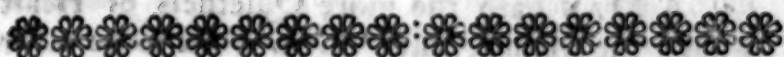
3. IN REGARD of the Thing more generally considered: Equivalently, if not super-abundantly, an Hindrance becomes a Furtherance of Good another Way: The Hindrance in Temporals may prove a Furtherance in Spirituals; or, the Hindrance in less Matters of temporal Concernment, may be a Furtherance in what is of greater Consequence. I find an Illustration for this in *Moryson's Itinerary*, (Part I. Book I. Chap. 5) At what Time a fair Wind arising, all the Ships weighed Anchor; the Anchor of our Ship brake, so our Consorts (seven other Ships) went on; but our Master, according to the Naval Discipline, not to put to Sea with one Anchor, returned back to the Harbour to buy a new Anchor; all of us cursing foolishly our Fortune. On *Tuesday Morning*, while we sadly walked on the Shore, we saw our Consorts coming back with torn Sails, and

dead Men lying on the Hatches; for they had met with two *Dunkirkers*, who had taken them, and spoiled their Ships.

*Thirdly*, TAKE a View of the rich Display of the Divine Attributes in the Exchange of Hindrances into Furtherances. More particularly observe,

1. THE Power of GOD. A potent Hindrance floops to Him who is Omnipotent. *Pharaoh* was a great Block in the *Israelites* Way out *Egypt*; yet the LORD with one Blow struck at the First-born, opens a Passage for *Israel*, *Exod. xii. 31.*

2. THE Wisdom of GOD, which is seen sometimes in the Quality of the Hindrance, which doth well accord with the Waggoners spanning the Wheel, whereby the steep Descent is check'd from being injurious. Again, The Wisdom of GOD is seen in the exact Timing of an Hindrance. *David* was disallowed by the Lords of the *Philistines*, discharged by *Achish*, and all this at such a Point of Time, that *David* might behold the Finger of GOD: As in bringing him off from going with *Achish* to Battle; so in returning him to *Ziglag*, where a sad Case called for his Haste. Lastly, The Wisdom of GOD is seen in a notable Adaption of what is an Hindrance in itself, with other Matters, and so it becomes a glorious Furtherance. *Daniel*, with his Religion, is attacked by the envious Courtiers of *Darius*; he is accused, condemned, thrown into the Lions Den; preserved there, delivered thence, honoured by the King, and a Decree made, That Men tremble and fear before the GOD of *Daniel*. This may teach us to admire the infinite Wisdom of GOD.



## OBSERVATION XXII.

*The Use of Means is Man's Works; the Success of them is GOD's Work.*

**W**HAT hath been said as touching the LORD's bringing about Things, is not to be understood as if the Use of Means were vain: And whereas here it is said, The Use of Means is Man's Work; this is not so to be conceived, as to deny a Work of Providence in the Use of the Means; for there is a Work of Providence in directing to the Means, and enabling to use them: The Meaning then is to point out Man's Duty, and so to leave the Result to Providence. And that the Use of Means is thus incumbent on Man, appeareth,

I. MAN will otherwise be found a Violator of the LORD's Command. *Make thee an Ark of Gopher-wood*, said GOD to Noah, Gen. vi. 14. *Thus did Noah; according to all that GOD commanded him, so did he*, Verse 22. Noah had been a Transgressor, had he expected Preservation without the Use of that Means. The Use of Means is commanded both for the outward and inward Man, in Respect of Temporals and Spirituall; so teacheth the Apostle, 1 Thes. iv. 11. *And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own Business, and to work with your own Hands, as we commanded you. And Work out your own Salvation with Fear and Trembling.*

2. A MAN hath the more Quietness of Heart in using the Means, altho' GOD work some other Way for Help. *Hezekiah* had the greater Ground for Calmness of Spirit, having done his Endeavour to check the *Assyrian* Insolency; *He took Counsel with his Princes and mighty Men, to stop the Waters of the Fountains which were without the City,* 2 Chron. xxxii. 3. Yet the *Assyrians* are not forced to leave their Siege by this Stratagem of War; GOD helps another Way; *the LORD sent an Angel, which cut off all the mighty Men of Valour, and the Leaders, and Captains, in the Camp of the King of Assyria.*

3. IT is a tempting GOD to throw by the Use of what Means are to be used. GOD promiseth the *Israelites* the Land of *Canaan*, and they do not fling away their Swords; for then they might be said to fight against GOD, in not fighting the Enemy: And when they had *Canaan* for their Possession, they were to look after Corn, and not expect Manna, for Manna ceased, and the old Corn of the Land supplies them the first Year, *Josh. v. 12.* When the Devil said to *Christ*, *Cast Thyself down,* Matt. iv. 6. *Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the LORD thy God,* Verse 7. It is not what is taught in *Christ's* School, to run to Miracles when Means are to be used.

YET the Success of Means is GOD's Work. Four Things are considerable herein:

1. IT belongs to GOD as his Prerogative-Royal to succeed Matters as He sees fit. *Unto GOD the LORD belong the Issues from Death,* Psalm lxxviii. 20. *The Preparations of the Heart in Man, and the*



*the Answer of the Tongue, is from the LORD, Prov. xvi. 1. The Horse is prepared against the Day of Battle; but Safety is of the LORD, Prov. xxi. 31.*

2. PROBABLE Means take not, and improbable ones attain the End, as the LORD is pleased. *Asa's* College of Physicians cure him not, 2 *Chron.* xvi. 12. Some have by inconsiderable Means been recovered of Sickness, when others, notwithstanding vast Expences, have slipt into their Graves. It is observable, how an Handful of Men do sometimes beat a vast Army: The Army of the *Syrians* came with a small Company, and the LORD delivered a great Host into their Hand, 2 *Chron.* xxiv. 24.

3. MEANS used take not, 'till God be pleased effectually to work in his Providence. *Joseph* was not so fool-hardy, as not to use Means for his Liberty; *But think on me* (said he to *Pharaoh's* Butler) *when it shall be well with thee; and shew Kindness, I pray thee, unto me; and make Mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this House,* Gen. xl. 14. *Joseph* here doth his Duty, yet did not the chief Butler remember *Joseph*, but forgot Him, Verse 23. And though the Butler forgot *Joseph*, yet GOD remembers *Joseph*, sends a Dream to the King, a great Noise is made at Court hereupon; and this awakens the Butler from his sleepy Forgetfulness; *I remember* (saith he) *my Faults this Day.*

4. MEANS used have sometimes a quite contrary Issue to what they are intended, or might in Probability produce. *Christ's* Innocency, his Reply to the Charge about Kingship, *John* xviii. 36. the Dissuasive by *Pilate's* Wife, *Matt.* xxvii. 19. the Testi-

Testimony of *Pilate's* Conscience, *Matt.* xxvii. 24. all these center not in the absolving of *Christ*, but He must suffer. That Means have a quite contrary Issue, hath before been demonstrated in distinct Observations.

(1) SEE the Error of those who more or less cast off the Use of Means.

1. How repugnant is this to the Dictates of common Reason. Reason dictates the Use, and the proportionable Use of Means in all Matters. The common Proverb evidences so much; *We must not lie in the Ditch, and cry God help.*

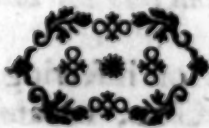
2. How contradictory is this Course often to the Persons own Practice. There was one who had taken up a Conceit, that if GOD would save him, he should be saved; and if not, the Use of all Means was in vain: He falls sick, sends for a Physician, who knowing the Disease of the Patient's Mind, as well as the Disease of the Body, replies, "If GOD have a Purpose to recover you, you shall be recovered; and if not all my Labour will be lost".

(2) BE encouraged to the Use of Means in Matters. *Jacob* had his Presents for *Esau*; and there was an honest Policy in the Manner of ordering the Presents sent, *Gen.* xxxii. 13 to 21. *Jeremiah* was earnest with the King, saying, *Let my Supplication, I pray thee, be accepted before thee, that thou cause me not to return to the House of Jonathan the Scribe, lest I die there,* *Jer.* xxxvii. 20. Besides the common Practice of GOD's People in the Use of Means, there are two Things observable; that they have used Means, notwithstanding

ing the Promise of GOD for the effecting of Matters; and also, notwithstanding remarkable Providences displayed in their precedent Preservation. To conclude this, let two Things be remembered:

1. SEE the Means be regular. Means are regular, (1) In Regard of natural Tendency to the End: He that will plow his Land, must not beat his Plowshare into a Sword; and he that will go to Battle, must not beat his Sword into a Pruning-hook. If *Jeremiah* must be had up out of the Dungeon, he is not drawn up with a Twine-thread, but with Cords. (2) In Regard of GOD's Command. Men must not, under Difficulties, with *Saul*, go to an *Endor* Woman. To fall in with Sin, is to fall out with GOD's Word, which warrants no such Means to be used.

2. EYE GOD dependently and submissively in the Use of Means. *Jacob* did mind Prayer to GOD, as well as the Presents sent. There was a Conjunction of Piety and Policy. With many, the Means is the speaking Figure, and GOD the dumb Cypher in a Business; but with *Jacob* it was not so. Let *Jacob's* GOD be thy GOD in the Use of the Means, if thou wilt have Him be thy GOD in the good Success of them. Eye Him therefore in all; and say as *David*, *Let Him do to me as seemeth Him good.*



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*The* CONCLUSION.

**I**T remains only to give some general Directions for the Improvement of providential Dispensations.

1. MAKE not second Causes sole Causes in Matters, by denying the Agency of the first Cause. Some there are (as a reverend Man saith) who will rather ascribe *Noah's Flood* to an extraordinary Concourse of watry Planets; or the Drowning of *Pharaoh's Host* to the inconsiderate venturing upon an high Tide, than to God's Wrath for Sin. Now whatever Shifts Men have to the darkening of the Hand of Providence, the holy Scriptures teach us otherwise. The Destruction of *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah* is attributed to God as the righteous Author thereof; and yet there are not wanting some who impute that visible Desolation to a Contingency of second Causes; and this Imputation of theirs is contrary to the Scripture, which doth in an eminent Sort set forth the Hand of God as falling heavy on those Places, *Gen. xix. 24, 25. Deut. xxix. 23. 2 Pet. ii. 6.* It is worthy of Observation, that there are frequent Tempests in the *Mediterranean Sea*, where *Jonah* sailed, and yet there is no Reason to deny Providence in his Voyage; for it is said, *The LORD sent out a great Wind into the Sea, Jonah i. 4.*

2. TAKE Heed of inferring an Interest in the special Favour of God, because of some remarkable Preservations and Deliverances. I deny not, but



but external Preservations to some are argumentative of GOD's Love. *By this I know* (saith David) *Thou favourest me, because mine Enemy doth not triumph over me,* Psalm xli. 11. But Providence is good to those also who are bad, and continue so. *Jeheash* in his Minority was wonderfully preserved from the Fury of *Athaliah*, 2 Chron. xxii. 10, 11. and yet he who was so preserved becomes an Apostate from GOD. The 107th Psalm is a Treatise of Divine Providence by Way of Preservation and Deliverance from Dangers. *Calvin* there extends the Providence of GOD to Men in common, bad as well as good; the bad are not excluded, though the good may be more eminently included. There are four Sorts of deep Difficulties, out of which Men are rescued by an eminent Hand of Providence.

1. PERILOUS Journies, ere Men are returned to Places of their Habitation. This from Verse 1 to 10.
2. Grievous Imprisonments, so that there is little Hope of Life; This from Verse 10 to 17.
3. Sore Diseases: From Verse 17 to 23.
4. Dangerous Storms at Sea: From Verse 23 to 33.

FROM this it may be argued, If all such as have had GOD's Providence propitious towards them in Journies, Prisons, Sicknes, Tempests, shall hereupon infer an undoubted Right to the Grace of GOD in *Jesus Christ*, they will build upon a sandy Foundation: The best Way then is, to look to this, that we be truly good, and so *all Things shall work together for Good.*

3. GIVE not Way to groundless and superstitious Conceits about Providence. Some are for observing a Providence as such, or according to their Fancy

Fancy on it : They are superstitiously serious about Trifles, and trifle about serious Matters. Mr. *Perkins* on the Third Commandment, saith thus of Superstition : “ It is an Opinion of the Works of GOD’s Providence, the Reason whereof can neither be drawn out of the Word of GOD, nor the whole Course of Nature : For Example ; that it is unlucky for one in the Morning to put on his Shoe awry ; or to put on the left Shoe on the right Foot ; to sneeze in drawing on his Shoes ; to have Salt fall towards him ; to bleed some few Drops of Blood : Again, That it is good Luck to find old Iron ; to have Drink spilled on him ; to pare our Nails on some certain Day of the Week ; to dream of some certain Things.” Thus that Man of GOD judged such Fancies to be far from true worshipping of GOD. There is one vulgar Observation which is not named here, but too frequently by many others, and that is this, *viz.* A black Conclusion inferred from the Rats or Mice eating Cloaths ; no less than the Death of the Party is concluded : And because such Principles are so rooted in the Hearts of some, I shall a little speak to it : First then, It is not denied, but the Providence of GOD reacheth to Rats and Mice ; which He doth use sometimes as remarkable Scourges to the Sons of Men. There is a received Story of a Bishop in *Germany*, who in a Time of Famine shut up many poor Men in a Barn, caused Fire to be kindled about them, and pleased himself with their Cries, saying, *Hark how these Mice cry* ; afterwards this Man of Blood was pursued by Mice, insomuch that he built an House in the River *Rhine*, to secure himself ; yet there the Vermin followed him with an Arrest from Heaven, swimming thro’ the Water, and so devoured the Devourer. But secondly, tho’ Providence extends to Rats and Mice, yet spoiling the Garment by such

such is not a Prognostick of Death: For it is common to these Creatures to waste and spoil: Hunger makes them break thro' such soft Walls: *Cato*, when one made a Complaint that a Rat had gnawn his Hose, replied, It was no Marvel; it would have been, if his Hose had gnawn the Rat.

4. SECURE an Interest in the GOD of Providence, as reconciled to thee through *Jesus Christ*. What the Marrow of Divine Blessing is, *Peter* gives us to understand in that Sermon to the *Jews*, *Acts* iii. 26. *Unto you first GOD having raised up his Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his Iniquities.* All outward Blessings are but dry Bones, if this Marrow of Pardoning-Grace be wanting. *Luther* calls all the *Turkish* Magnificence, Wealth, Power, but a Crumb cast to a Dog. It is a Propriety in GOD that varnisheth all the outward Blessings of GOD: This draws a golden Thread thro' all thy Creature-Comforts: Thy Food, thy Health, thy Raiment, thy Relations, become double Blessings; yea, thy Wants, thy Sicknefs, thy Reproaches have lost their Sting; for if GOD be thine, these are thine for thy Good: The Covenant of Grace hath made an happy Conversion of Troubles into Medicines; and Providence hath undertaken the Cure; a Physician able to perform what is undertaken.

5. GET more and more Acquaintance with the Holy Scriptures, in order to Proficiency in the School of Divine Providence. If GOD's Word be received as our Inmate, we shall not be such Strangers to Providence as others are; and that (1) Because the Scripture hath a Finger to untie the hard Knots of Providence: A Parallel, or something

thing by Way of Implication, is contained in the Scriptures, which gives Light to a dark Dispensation, and so gives Ground to say in this Sense, as is said *Eccles. i. 10. Is there any Thing whereof it may be said, See, this is new? It hath been of old Time.* (2) The Reason why some are so baffled and troubled about some Dispensations, is from not understanding the Word of GOD: He that shall mistake a Promise, will be under a Temptation to quarrel at a Providence. Sense and Reason sometimes raise a Dust, but Faith allays all; and the Prophet's Storm ends in a Calm, *Psal. lxxxix. 52. Blessed be the LORD for evermore, Am n, and Amen.* (3) For Want of a sound Acquaintance with the Word, a Providence is little improved, yea misimproved: That Dispensation that should open the Eyes, shuts them. *Ahab* chargeth the Troubles of *Israel* on *Elijah*; but by the Light from the Word, he might have gone into *Obadiah's* Hiding-hole, and seen the ejected Prophets, and then concluded who troubled *Israel*. The Princes in *Germany* at an Assembly, imputed the Cause of their Calamities to the not decking of their Churches, and setting up of Images in them. A poor Improvement of their Calamities! as if the Finger of Providence pointed at nothing but Pencils and Carving-Tools! I may well therefore commend to Men that of *David* in *Psal. xix. 8. The Commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightning the Eyes.*

6. KEEP up an holy Communion with GOD in his Dispensations. If Providence have a Tongue to speak, Men should have an Ear to hear: As it is Man's Wisdom to enquire into the Ends of GOD's Dispensations, so it is his Folly to go no farther than Enquiry: An holy Conformity should be the Result of our Enquiry: To know *this* or *that*



that to be the End of GOD in a Dispensation, and yet not to comply with it, is double Iniquity. Let it be thy Care then seriously to consider what Errand this or that Dispensation hath to thy Soul; hear it awfully, and obey it fully; so shall GOD have the Glory of his Providence, and thy Soul the Comfort of thy Duty.

7. LOOK after Increase of Grace, in order to the better bearing of Providential Dispensations. The Apostle *Paul* calleth on the *Ephesians* to be strong in the LORD, and in the Power of his Might, Eph. vi. 10. And good Reason there is for this; for weak Bottles are not fit for the new and strong Wine of Divine Dispensations. Eminency, as well as Reality of Grace, is the Christian's Concernment; and this appears, if an Eye be had (1) To the Eminency of a Divine Dispensation: There is sometimes an *Isaac-Trial*, and a Man had Need of *Abraham's Faith*. (2) To the Variety of Dispensations: Prosperity and Adversity often take their Turns: It is no easy Matter to manage wisely Variety of Conditions. (3) To the Suddenness or Unexpectedness of a Dispensation: Weak Bodies are not so capable of bearing sudden Changes in Diet, Air, Apparel, as those that are strong and vigorous: A sudden Affliction may press a Man too low; and an unexpected Mercy may lift a Man too high: He had Need of good Eyes, who is taken out of a dark Dungeon and set on the Top of an high Tower. Let then the Consideration of the Height, Variety, Suddenness, of Providential Dispensations, be an Excitement to look after an Increase of Grace; the Exercise of Grace increased, and a further Increase of Grace exercised.

8. KEEP a good Conscience in following the Work of the Station wherein Providence hath placed thee: Set before thine Eyes the good Examples of such as have minded the Work of their Places, and imitate them: Above all Examples, forget not that of *Christ*, *John* xvii. 4. *I have glorified Thee on Earth, I have finished the Work which Thou gavest Me to do.* There is a Work which every one is to make Conscience of, and to glorify God in minding it:—*Magistrates are to be just, ruling in the Fear of the LORD*, 2 Sam. xxiii. 3. They who are Gods in regard of their Places, are not to be Devils in regard of their Administrations. Churchmen are to mind their Work: *Paul* had his *Conversation in Simplicity and godly Sincerity*, 2 Cor. i. 12. He was *laborious in the LORD's Vineyard*, 1 Cor. xv. 10. Parents, Masters, Children, Servants, are to consider, how they move in the Sphere of their respective Stations:—No Place so mean but a Person may glorify GOD in it: Obedience to GOD in the Place where Providence hath fixed a Person, is better than Sacrifice out of it.

*Lastly*, LIVE holily and thankfully according to the Providential Dispensations which have met in thy Person, Family, or Relations. To this End consider the following Incentives:

1. WITH what holy Earnestness is this pressed in Scripture? See *Deut.* viii. 6, with the precedent Verses; *Job.* xxiv. 14. *1 Sam.* xii. 24. *Ephes.* ii. 11, 12, 13.

2. SIN otherwise is greatly aggravated. The LORD may say for Neglect of a suitable Carriage towards his Dispensations, as *David* of *Nabal*, *Surely in vain have I kept all that this Fellow hath*  
in

*this Wilderness, 1 Sam. xxv. 21. It is made an Aggravation of Hezekiah's Sin, that he rendered not again according to the Benefit done unto him; for his Heart was lifted up, 2 Chron. xxxii. 25.*

3. THIS may invite the GOD of Providence to do more: *If that had been too little for thee (saith GOD by Nathan to David) I would moreover have given unto thee such and such Things, 2 Sam. xii. 8. GOD hath a Treasure of Kindness; He will not be a barren Wilderness to those who are a Carmel for holy Fruitfulness.*

I CONCLUDE all with that of the Apostle, 1 Cor. xv. 58. *Therefore my beloved Brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the Work of the LORD, forasmuch as you know that your Labour is not in vain in the LORD.*

*End of a Prospect of Divine Providence.*



the Providence of God. It is made an  
illustration of His Providence in that He  
has made a way for the poor and lowly  
in the midst of the rich and powerful.

This may inspire the God of Providence to  
show us that He has the power to do  
God by His Providence. I would not say that  
He has made a way for the poor and lowly  
in the midst of the rich and powerful. He will not  
be a barren wilderness to those who are a Canal  
for holy Providence.

I cannot say with him of the Apostles, I can  
say that He has made a way for the poor and lowly  
in the midst of the rich and powerful. He will not  
be a barren wilderness to those who are a Canal  
for holy Providence.

6 JY 64

End of a Project of Divine Providence

It is a project of Divine Providence  
that He has made a way for the poor and lowly  
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AN  
EXTRACT  
FROM  
*MOLINOS's*  
Spiritual Guide.

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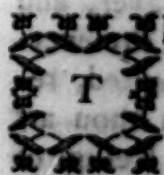
## P A R T I.

Of the Temptations wherewith God  
purges Souls.

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## C H A P. I.

*To the End God may rest in the Soul, the Heart  
is always to be kept peaceable in whatsoever  
Temptations.*



THOU art to know thy Soul is the Habitation and Kingdom of God. That therefore the sovereign King may rest on that Throne of thy Soul, thou oughtest to take Pains to keep it clean; quiet and peaceable; clean from Guilt and Defects; quiet from Fears; and peaceable in Temptations; and Tribulations.

THOU

THOU oughtest always then to keep thine Heart in Peace, that thou mayst keep pure that Temple of GOD; and with a right and pure Intention, thou art to work, pray, obey, and suffer, without being in the least moved, whatever it pleases the LORD to send unto thee; because it is certain, that for the Good of thy Soul, and for thy spiritual Profit, He will suffer the Enemy to trouble that City of Rest, and Throne of Peace, with Temptations, Suggestions, and Tribulations, and by the Means of Creatures, with Troubles and Persecutions.

BE constant, and cheer up thine Heart in whatsoever Disquiet these Tribulations may cause to thee. Enter within it, that thou mayst overcome it, for therein is the Divine Fortrefs, which defends, protects and fights for thee. If a Man hath a safe Fortrefs, he is not disquieted, though his Enemies pursue him, because by retreating within it, these are disappointed. The strong Castle that will make thee triumph over all thine Enemies, visible and invisible, and over all their Snares and Tribulations, is within thine own Soul; because in it resides the Divine Aid and Sovereign Strength: Retreat within it, and all will be quiet, secure, peaceable and calm.

IT ought to be thy continual Exercise to pacify that Throne of thy Heart, that the supreme King may rest therein. Thy Protection is Prayer, and a loving Recollection in the Divine Presence. When thou seest thyself more sharply assaulted, retreat into that Region of Peace: When thou art more faint-hearted, betake thyself to this Refuge of Prayer, the only Armour for overcoming the Enemy: Thou oughtest not to be at a Distance from it in a Storm, to the End thou mayst, as another *Noah*, experience Tranquility, Security and Serenity,



nity, and to the End thy Will may be resigned, devote, peaceful and courageous.

**FINALLY,** Be not afflicted nor discouraged, He returns to quiet thee: This Divine LORD will be alone with thee, to rest in thy Soul, and form therein a rich Throne of Peace: Within thine own Heart, with his heavenly Grace, thou mayst look for Silence in Tumult, Solitude in Company, Light in Darkness, Vigour in Despondency, Courage in Fear, Resistance in Temptation, Peace in War, and Quiet in Tribulation.



C H A P. II.

*The Soul ought to persevere in Prayer.*

**T**HOU wilt find thyself full of Confusion and Doubts, because it will seem to thee, that GOD does no more assist thee as formerly; that the Exercise of Prayer is not in thy Power; that thou lovest Time, whilst hardly, and with great Trouble, thou canst make one single Ejaculation as thou wast wont to do.

THOU oughtest then to be persuaded, that thou mayst not draw back when thou wantest Expansion in Prayer: It is a clear Sign that the LORD will have thee walk by Faith in his Divine Presence, which is the most profitable Path; when with a simple View, or Attention to GOD, the Soul appears like a humble Suppliant before its LORD, or as an innocent Child, that casts itself into the Bosom of its dear Mother. Thus did *Gerson* express it.

it. "Tho' I have spent forty Years in Reading  
 "and Prayer, yet I could never find any Thing  
 "more efficacious, than that our Spirit should  
 "become like a young Child and Beggar in the  
 "Presence of God."

WHEN GOD had a Mind to instruct his own  
 Captain *Moses*, *Exod.* xxiv. and give him the two  
 Tables of the Law, He called him up to the  
 Mountain; at what Time GOD being there with  
 him, the Mount was darkened, and environed with  
 thick Clouds, *Moses* standing idle, not knowing  
 what to say. Seven Days after, GOD commanded  
*Moses* to come up to the Top of the Mountain,  
 where he shew'd him his Glory, and filled him  
 with Consolation.

So in the Beginning, when GOD intends to guide  
 the Soul into the School of the internal Law, He  
 often makes it go with Darkness and Dryness, that  
 He may bring it near to Himself; because the Di-  
 vine Majesty knows very well, it is not by the  
 Means of ones own Industry, that a Soul draws  
 near to Him, and understands the Divine Teach-  
 ings; but rather by humble Resignation.

THE Patriarch *Noah* gave a great Instance of  
 this; who after he had been by all Men reckoned  
 a Fool, floating in the Middle of a raging Sea,  
 wherewith the whole World was overflowed, with-  
 out Sails and Oars, and environed with wild Beasts  
 in the Ark, walked by Faith alone, not knowing  
 nor understanding what GOD had a Mind to do  
 with him.

WHAT most concerns thee, O redeemed Soul,  
 is Patience, not to desist from Prayer: Walk with  
 firm Faith, trusting that GOD, who changes not,  
 neither

neither can err, intends nothing but thy Good. He who is a dying, must needs feel it; but how well is Time employed, when the Soul is dead, and resigned in the Presence of GOD, without any Distraction, to receive the Divine Influences?

IF thou wouldst be happy, believe, suffer and have Patience, be confident and walk on; it concerns thee far more to hold thy Peace, and to let thyself be guided by the Hand of GOD, than to enjoy all the Goods of this World. And though it seem to thee, that thou dost nothing at all, yet it is of infinite Fruit.

WHO would not think, during so long a Time that the Seed lies in the Earth, but that it were lost? Yet afterwards it is seen to spring up, grow and multiply. GOD does the same with the Soul: Whilst it thinks it does nothing, and is in a Manner undone, in Time it comes to itself again, improved, disengaged, and perfect.

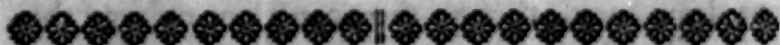
TAKE Care then, that thou afflict not thyself, nor draw back, though thou canst not enlarge thyself in Prayer; suffer, hold thy Peace, and appear in the Presence of GOD; persevere constantly, and trust to his infinite Bounty, who can give unto thee constant Faith, true Light, and Divine Grace: Put thyself into his kind and paternal Hands, resolving to do nothing but what his Divine Will and Pleasure is.

ST. AUGUSTINE complained, " I, LORD, went  
" wandering like a strayed Sheep, seeking Thee  
" with anxious Reasoning without, whilst Thou  
" wast within me: I wearied myself much in look-  
" ing for Thee without, and yet Thou hast thy  
" Habitation within me: I went round the Streets  
VOL. XXXVIII. X " and

“ and Places of the City of this World, seeking  
 “ Thee, and found Thee not; because in vain I  
 “ sought without, for Him who was within my-  
 “ self.” *Soliloq.* c. 31.

AND wouldst thou disquiet thyself, and leave off Prayer, because thou knowest not, or canst not tell how to enlarge therein, though thou mayst have a good Will, and pure Intention? What will GOD do to redeemed Souls, though they cannot speak nor Reason, if they believe, trust, and open their Mouths to Heaven? Is it not certain that the Divine Bounty will provide for them, and give them their necessary Food?

IT is no small Gift of GOD, for the Soul, finding itself deprived of the sensible Pleasures it had, to walk by holy Faith only. Wherefore endeavour to be constant, and not draw back; though Discourse be wanting to thee in Prayer, believe at that Time firmly, and patiently persevere, if thou wouldst attain to the Divine Union.



### C H A P. III.

*The Soul is not to afflict itself, nor intermit Prayer, because it sees itself encompassed with Dryness and Darknes.*

THERE are two Sorts of Prayer, the one tender, delightful, amiable, and full of Joy; the other dry, desolate, tempted and darksome. GOD gives the first to gain Souls; the second



cond to purify them. With the first He uses them like Children; with the second He begins to deal with them as with strong Men.

KNOW that the LORD makes Use of the Veil of Dryness, to the End we may be humble; because if we felt and knew what he is working in our Souls, Presumption would get in, reckoning ourselves very near to GOD; which would be our Undoing.

THOU oughtest not then to afflict thyself, nor think that thou reapest no Fruit, because in coming from a Communion or Prayer, thou hast not the Experience of Joy. The Husbandman sows in one Time, and reaps in another: So GOD, in his own due Time, when least thou thinkest, will give thee holy Purposes, and more effectual Desires of serving Him. Some of the infinite Fruits that thy Soul may reap from Dryness, are,

1. A LOATHING of the Things of the World, stifling the bad Desires of thy past Life, and producing new ones of serving GOD.

2. A DEEPER Sense of many Failings, on which formerly thou didst not reflect.

3. STRONGER Desires of suffering, and of doing the Will of GOD.

4. GREATER Ease in overcoming thyself, and conquering the Passions, and Enemies that hinder thee in the Way.

5. A HIGH Esteem of GOD above all created Beings, a Contempt of Creatures, and a firm Resolution not to abandon Prayer, though thou

knowest that it will prove to thee a most cruel Martyrdom.

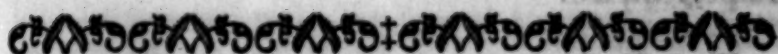
6. GREATER Peace in thy Soul, Humility, Confidence in GOD, Submission, and Abstraction from all Creatures.

ALL these, and many other Fruits, are like new Buds that spring from the Prayer which thou wouldst give over, because it seems to thee, that thou seest no Fruit of it, nor reapest no Advantage therefrom.

THOU oughtest not to grieve and disturb thyself, judging that GOD hath failed thee; thou oughtest rather at that Time persevere constantly in Prayer. O how happy wilt thou be, if thou embrace it with Peace and Resignation.

WHAT thou oughtest to do, is to believe, that thou art before the LORD, and in his Presence; but thou oughtest to do so, with a sweet and quiet Attention, nor desire to know any Thing, nor do any Thing, but what is the good Will and Pleasure of GOD; because otherwise thou wilt only make Circles all thy Life-Time, and not advance one Step towards Perfection.





CHAP. IV.

*It is necessary that GOD purge the Soul after his Way, because the Exercises that of itself it sets about, are not sufficient.*

**S**O soon as thou shalt firmly resolve to mortify thy Senses, that thou mayst advance towards Union with GOD, his Divine Majesty will set his Hand to the purging thy evil Inclinations, inordinate Desires, vain Complacency, Self-love and Pride, and other hidden Vices, which reign in the inner Parts of thy Soul, and hinder the Divine Union.

**T**HOU wilt never attain to this happy State, tho' thou tire thyself out with the external Acts of Mortification, until the LORD purge thee inwardly, and discipline thee after his own Way, because He alone knows how secret Faults are to be purged out.

GOD will do this in thy Soul by Means of the Cross, if thou freely givest thy Consent to it by Resignation. All thou hast to do, is to do nothing by thy own Choice: Quietly resign thyself up in every Thing, whereby the LORD shall think fit internally or externally to mortify thee; because that is the only Means by which thy Soul can become capable of the Divine Influences, whilst thou sufferest internal and external Tribulation, with Humility, Patience and Quiet; not the Penances,

Disciplines and Mortifications which thou couldst impose thyself.

THE Husbandman sets a greater Esteem upon the Plants which he sows in the Ground, than those that spring up of themselves. In the same Manner GOD is better pleased with the Virtue which He infuses into the Soul, than all the Virtues which the Soul pretends to acquire by its own Endeavours.

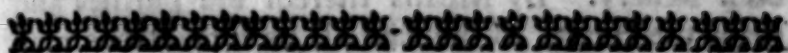
EXERCISE thyself in another Manner than hitherto, giving thy Consent to receive the Secret and Divine Operations, and to be polished and purified by the LORD, which is the only Means whereby thou wilt be purged.

THE Creatures will forsake thee, nay, those too from which thou hopedst for most Favour and Compassion.

THE invisible Enemies will pursue thee with Scruples, lascivious Suggestions, and unclean Thoughts, perhaps with Incentives to Impatience, Pride, Rage, Cursing, and Blaspheming the Name of GOD, his Sacraments and holy Mysteries. Thou wilt find a great Lukewarmness, Loathing, and Wearisomeness for the Things of GOD; an Obscurity and Darkness in thy Understanding; a Faintness, Confusion and Narrowness of Heart; such a Coldness and Feebleness of Will to resist, that a Straw will appear to thee a Beam.

BUT fear not: All this is for the purging thy Soul; and making it know its own Misery, and sensibly perceive the Annihilation of all the Passions and inordinate Appetites, wherewith it rejoiced itself.





C H A P. V.

*The Soul ought not to be disquieted; nor draw back in the Spiritual Way, because it finds itself assaulted by Temptations.*

**O**UR own Nature is so base, proud and ambitious, and so full of its own Appetites, its own Judgment and Opinions, that if Temptations restrained it not, it would be undone without Remedy. The LORD then seeing our Misery and perverse Inclination, and thereby moved to Compassion, suffers us to be assaulted by divers Temptations, and by violent Suggestions of Impatience, Pride, Gluttony, Rage, Blasphemy, Despair, and an infinite Number of others, to the End we may know ourselves: With these, that infinite Goodness humbles our Pride, giving us in them the most wholesome Medicine.

ALL our Righteousness (as *Isaiah* saith, Chap. lxiv. 6.) are as filthy Rags, through the Stains of Vanity, Conceitedness, and Self-love. It is necessary they be purified with the Fire of Temptation, that they may be pure, perfect, and agreeable to the Eyes of GOD.

THEREFORE the LORD purifies the Soul which He calls, and will have for Himself, with the rough Fire of Temptation, with which He polishes it from the Rust of Pride, Avarice, Vanity, Ambition, Presumption. With the same He humbles, pacifies,

pacifies and exercises it, making it to know its own Misery. By Means thereof He purifies and strips the Heart, to the End all its Operations may be pure, and of inestimable Value.

MANY Souls, when they suffer these, are troubled and disquieted, it seeming to them, that they already suffer eternal Punishments; and if by Misfortune they go to an unexperienced Pastor, instead of comforting them, he leaves them in greater Perplexities.

THAT thou mayst not lose internal Peace, believe that it is the Divine Mercy, which thus afflicts and tries thee; since by that Means the Soul comes to have a deep Knowledge of itself, reckoning itself the worst of all living, and hence with Humility and Lowliness it abhors itself. O how happy would Souls be, if they would be quiet, and believe that these Temptations are for their Spiritual Profit.

BUT thou wilt say, it is not the Work of the Devil, but the Effects of thy Neighbours Faults and Malice, in having wronged and injured thee.

DOST thou receive an Injury from any Man? There are two Things in it; the Sin of him that does it, and the Punishment that thou sufferest: The Sin is against the Will of GOD, and displeases Him, though He permits it; the Punishment He wills for thy Good: Wherefore thou oughtest to receive it, as from his Hand. The Passion and Death of our LORD *Christ*, were the Effects of the Wickedness of *Pilate*; and yet it is certain, that GOD willed the Death of his own Son for our Redemption.

**THE LORD** makes Use of another's Fault for the Good of thy Soul. O the Greatness of the Divine Wisdom, who can pry in the Depth of the Means whereby He guides the Soul, which He would have purged, and transformed into his own Likeness!

**THAT** the Soul may be the Habitation of the celestial King, it is necessary it should be pure, and without any Blemish; wherefore the **LORD** purifies it as Gold in the Furnace of Temptation. Certain it is, that the Soul never loves nor believes more, than when it is afflicted with Temptation.

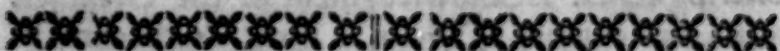
**THE** Effects that remain, make this clear; and commonly these are a Loathing of itself, with a most profound Acknowledgment of the Greatness and Omnipotence of **GOD**, a great Confidence in the **LORD**, that He will deliver it from all Danger; believing and confessing with far greater Vigour of Faith, that it is **GOD** who gives it Strength to bear these Temptations, because it would naturally be impossible, considering the Violence wherewith sometimes they attack, to resist one Quarter of an Hour.

**THE** more Temptations beset thee, the more thou oughtest to rejoice in Peace, instead of being sad, and thank **GOD** for the Favour He does thee. In all those Temptations, and odious Thoughts, the Remedy is to despise them with a stayed Neglect, because nothing more afflicts the proud Devil, than to see that he is slighted and despised. Therefore tarry, as one that perceives him not, and possess thyself in Peace without Repining, and without multiplying Reasons and Answers; seeing nothing is more dangerous, than to vie in Reasons with him who is ready to deceive thee.

**THE**

THE Saints in arriving at Holiness, passed thro' this Valley of Temptations; and the greater Saints they were, the greater Temptations they grappled with: Nay, after the Saints have attained to Holiness, the LORD suffers them to be tempted, that their Crown may be the greater, and that the Spirit of Vain-glory may be checked, or hindered from entering in them.

FINALLY, Thou art to know, that the greatest Temptation is to be without Temptation; wherefore thou oughtest to be glad when it assaults thee, and with Resignation, Peace, and Constancy, resist it.



## CHAP. VI.

### *The Nature of internal Recollection.*

INTERNAL Recollection is Faith, and Silence in the Presence of GOD. Hence thou oughtest to be accustomed to recollect thyself in his Presence, with an affectionate Attention, as one that is given up to GOD, and united unto Him, with Reverence, Humility, and Submission, beholding Him in the most inward Recess of thine own Soul by the Eye of living Faith.

THERE thou art to be with Attention and a sincere Regard, with a sedate Heedfulness, and full of Love, resigning and delivering thyself up into his Hands,



Hands, to the End He may dispose of thee, according to his good Will and Pleasure.

THE Prayer of internal Recollection may be well typified by that Wrestling which the Holy Scriptures say *Jacob* had all Night with GOD, until Day broke, and He blessed him. Wherefore the Soul is to persevere, and wrestle with the Difficulties that it will find in internal Recollection, until the Sun of internal Light appear, and the LORD give it his Blessing.

As to the various, impertinent, troublesome and ugly Thoughts thou then hast; the best Thing that is to be done, is sweetly to despise them, to know thine own Wretchedness, and peacefully make an Offering to GOD of the Trouble.

THOUGH thou canst not get rid of them, yet be not afflicted, neither leave off Recollection; resign thyself at that Time with Vigour, endure with Patience, and persevere in his Presence; for whilst thou persevereest after that Manner, thy Soul will be internally improved.

DOST thou believe that when thou comest away from Prayer dry, in the same Manner as thou began in, that it hath done thee no Good? That is a Fallacy; because the Fruit of true Prayer, consists not only in enjoying the Light, but in enduring with Patience, and persevering in Faith, believing that thou art in the LORD's Presence, turning to Him thy Heart with Tranquillity and Purity of Mind. Whilst thou persevereest in this Manner, thou hast the only Preparation which at that Time is necessary, and shalt reap infinite Fruit.

WAR is usual in this internal Recollection, to try, humble and purge thee. Invisible Enemies will assault thee with continual Suggestions, to trouble and disquiet thee. Nature herself will torment thee, she being always an Enemy to the Spirit; often it remains weak, melancholy, and full of Irksomeness, so that it feels a Hell in Spiritual Exercises, particularly in Prayer; hence it grows extremely impatient to be at an End of it, through the Uneasiness of Thoughts, Lassitude of Body, importunate Sleep, and thy not being able to curb the Senses. Happy art thou, if thou canst persevere amidst this Martyrdom.

IN Recollection the Devil frequently charges the Soul fiercely with a Battalion of Thoughts, to discomfort the Quiet of the Soul, and alienate it from that internal Conversation: But provided they be not consented to, they double the Profit.

As many Times as thou exercisest thyself, calmly to reject these vain Thoughts, so many Crowns will the LORD set upon thy Head; and though it may seem to thee that thou dost nothing, be undeceived; for a good Desire, with Firmness and Steadfastness in Prayer, is very pleasing to the LORD.

GOD loves not him who hears most, but who suffers most, if he pray with Faith and Reverence in the Divine Presence.

GOD hath no Regard to the Multitude of Words, but to the Purity of the Intention. His greatest Glory at that Time, is, to see the Soul desirous, humble, quiet and resigned. Proceed, persevere, pray, and hold thy Peace; for where thou findest not Joy, thou wilt find a Door whereby thou mayst enter into thine own Nothingness; knowing thyself

to be nothing, that thou canst do nothing; nay, and that thou hast not so much as a good Thought.

How many have begun this happy Practice of Prayer and internal Recollection, and have left it off, pretending that they felt no Pleasure, that they lose Time, that their Thoughts trouble them, and that that Prayer is not for them. All this is no more, but to seek themselves, and not God, because they cannot suffer a little Pain and Dryness; whereas by the least Act of Reverence towards God, amidst Dryness, they receive an eternal Reward.

FRANCESCA LOPEZ of *Valenza*, tells us three Things of great Consequence in order to internal Recollection :

IN the First Place, *That a Quarter of an Hour of Prayer, with Resignation and Humility, does more Good to the Soul, than five Days of penitential Exercises, Hair-Cloths, Disciplines, Fastings, and sleeping on bare Boards, because these are only Mortifications of the Body; but with Recollection the Soul is purified.*

SECONDLY, *That it is more pleasing to the Divine Majesty, to have the Soul in quiet and devout Prayer for the Space of an Hour, than to go in great Pilgrimages.*

THIRDLY, *That constant Prayer was to keep the Heart always right towards God, and that a Soul ought rather to act with the Affection of the Will, than the Toil of the Intellect.*

KNOW, that to fix the Will on God, restraining Thoughts and Temptations, with the greatest

Tranquility possible, is the highest Pitch of Praying.

THOU oughtest to go to Prayer, that thou mayst deliver thyself wholly up into the Hands of God, with perfect Resignation, exerting an Act of Faith, believing that thou art in the Divine Presence, afterwards settling in that holy Repose with Quietness and Tranquility; and endeavouring for a whole Day, a whole Year, and thy whole Life, to continue that first Act of Faith and Love.

MEANTIME thou oughtest to exercise thyself outwardly in the external Works of thy Calling; for in so doing thou dost the Will of God, and walkest in continual and virtual Prayer. "He always prays (said *Theophylact*) who does good Works; nor does he neglect Prayer, but when he leaves off to be just."

STRIVE when thou comest from Prayer, to the End thou mayst return to it again, not to be distracted nor diverted; but to carry thyself with a total Resignation to the Divine Will, that God may do with thee, and all thine, according to his heavenly Pleasure, relying on Him as on a kind and loving Father. Never recall that Intention, and though thou art taken up about the Affairs of the Condition wherein God hath placed thee, yet thou wilt still be in Prayer in the Presence of God, and in perpetual Acts of Resignation. Therefore *St. Chrysostom* said, "A just Man leaves not off to pray, unless he leaves off to be just: He always prays, who always does well; the good Desire is Prayer, and if the Desire be continued, so is also the Prayer."



ALL this Time remember, that our *LORD Christ* is the Guide, the Door, and the Way; as He Himself hath said in his own Words; *I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life*, John xiv. 6. And before the Soul can be fit to enter into the Presence of the Divinity, and to be united with it, it is to be washed with the precious Blood of a Redeemer, and adorned with the rich Robes of his Passion.

OUR *LORD Christ*, with his Doctrine and Example, is the Mirror, the Guide of the Soul, the Way, and the only Door by which we can enter into those Pastures of Life eternal, and into the vast Ocean of the Divinity. Hence it follows, that the Remembrance of the Passion and Death of our Saviour ought never to be blotted out; nay, it is also certain, that whatsoever high Elevation of Mind the Soul may be raised to, it ought not to separate from the most holy Humanity.

THE Way for Souls to enter by the Humanity of *Christ*, and entertain a Remembrance of Him, is the eying that Humanity, and the Passion thereof, by a simple Act of Faith, looking and reflecting on the same as the Tabernacle of the Divinity, the Beginning and End of our Salvation, *Jesus Christ* having been born, suffered and died a shameful Death for our Sakes.

THIS holy Remembrance of the Humanity, can be no Obstacle to internal Recollection; nay, the Remembrance of the Humanity of the Divine Word, gives no Impediment to the highest and most transformed Soul.

LET the Soul then, when it enters into Recollection, place itself at the Gate of Divine Mercy, which is the amiable and sweet Remembrance of

the Cross and Passion of the Word that was made Man, and died for Love; let it stand there with Humility, resigned to the Will of God, in whatsoever it pleases the Divine Majesty to do with it.

WONDERFULLY does *St. Paul* favour this our Doctrine in his Epistle to the *Colossians*, wherein he exhorts them and us, that whether we eat, drink, or do any Thing else, we should do it in the Name of *Jesus Christ*. GOD grant that we may all begin by *Jesus Christ*, and that in Him and by Him alone we may arrive at Perfection.

THIS Perfection consists not in speaking, nor in thinking much on GOD; but in loving Him: This Love is attained by Means of perfect Resignation. The Love of GOD has but few Words.

THAT a rational Creature may understand the secret Desire and Intention of thy Heart, there is a Necessity that thou should express it to him in Words: But GOD, who searcheth the Heart, standeth not in Need that thou shouldst assure Him of it; nor does He rest satisfied with Love in Word nor in Tongue: What avails it to tell Him, that thou perfectly lovest Him, if at one bitter Word, or slight Injury, thou dost not resign thyself for the Love of Him? A manifest Proof that thy Love was a Love in Tongue, and not in Deed.

STRIVE to be resigned in all Things, and in so doing, without saying that thou lovest Him, thou wilt attain to the most perfect Love.

*End of the First Part.*



THE



THE  
SPIRITUAL GUIDE.

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PART II.

Of Spiritual Martyrdoms; of Contemplation, perfect Resignation, Humility and internal Peace.

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CHAP. I.

*Who are truly Spiritual Men.*

**T**RULY Spiritual Men retire with Resignation into the Hands of God, putting off and forgetting themselves; and always go with a rais'd Spirit to the Presence of the LORD, by the Means of pure Faith, with great Assurance, Tranquility and Rest internal: In whom the Spirit draws with so much Force, that it makes the Soul contract inwardly, the Heart, the Body, and all the Powers of it..

As they have been cleared by GOD with the Fire of Tribulation, they are intirely subdued and denied, which makes them live with great Repose and internal Peace: And though in many Occasions they feel Resistance and Temptations, yet they become victorious, because being already Souls of Proof, and indued with Divine Strength, the Motions of Passions cannot last long upon them; and although vehement Temptations and troublesome Suggestions of the Enemy may persevere a long Time about them, they are all conquer'd, with infinite Gain; GOD being He that fights within them.

THESE Souls have already a true Knowledge of *Christ* our LORD both of his Divinity and his Humanity. They exercise this infused Knowledge with a Spirit that is pure and stripped of all Creatures; they are raised also from outward Actions to the Love of Humanity and Divinity; so much as they enjoy, they forget, and in all of it they find that they love their GOD with all their Heart and Spirit.

THESE blessed Souls take no Pleasure in any Thing of the World, but in Contempt, and in being forsaken and forgotten by every Body: They live so disinterested, that though they continually receive many supernatural Graces, yet they are just as if they had not received them, keeping always in the Inmost of their Hearts a great Lowliness and Contempt of themselves; always humbled in the Depth of their own Unworthiness and Vileness: They are alway quiet, serene, and possessed with Evenness of Mind in Graces and Favours as in the most bitter Torments. There is no News that affrights them; no Success that makes them glad; Tribulations never disturb them; nor  
tho



the Divine Communications make them vain and conceited; they remain always full of holy and filial Fear, in a wonderful Peace, Constancy and Serenity.

As the LORD is He that works, Virtue is established, Interests are rooted up, Imperfections are destroyed, and Passions removed; which makes the Soul free unexpectedly, and taken off, when Occasions are represented.

THESE Souls, as they have the true Light of GOD, by it know profoundly their own Weaknesses and Imperfections, and what they yet want to arrive at Perfection, towards which they are walking; they abhor themselves; they exercise themselves in a loving Fear of GOD, and Contempt of themselves; but with a true Hope in GOD, and Diffidence in themselves. The more they are humbled, the more they please GOD, and arrive at a singular Respect and Veneration in his Presence. Of all the good Works they continually do, and of all they continually suffer, as well within as without, they make no Manner of Account before that Divine Presence.

BUT know, that few are the Souls which arrive at this happy State; because few there are that are willing to embrace Contempt, and suffer themselves to be refined and purified; upon which Account, altho' they are many that enter into this interior Way, yet it is a rare Thing for a Soul to go on, and not stick upon the Entrance. The LORD said to a Soul, *This inward Way is trod by few; it is so high a Grace, that none deserve it; few walk in it, because it is no other than a Death of the Senses; and few there be that are willing so to die; in which Disposition this sovereign Gift is founded.*

IT

It is the saying of St. Bernard, That to serve God, is nothing else but to do Good and suffer Evil. He that would go to Perfection by the Means of Sweetness and Consolation is mistaken: You must desire no other Consolation from God, than to end your Life for his Sake. Our LORD's Way was not that of Sweetness and Softness, nor did He invite us to any such, either by his Words or Example. when He said, *He that will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his Cross and follow Me*, Luke ix. 23. The Soul that would be united to *Christ*, must be conformable to Him, and follow Him in the Way of Suffering.

THOU wilt scarce begin to relish Sweetness in Prayer, but the Enemy will be kindling in thy Heart Desires of the Desert and Solitude, that thou mayst without any Body's Hindrance spread the Sails to continual and delightful Prayers. Open thine Eyes, and consider that this Counsel and Desire is not conformable to the true Counsel of *Christ* our LORD, who has not invited us to follow our own Will, but to deny ourselves: As if He should say, he that will follow Me, let him part with his own Will wholly, and leaving all Things, let him intirely submit to the Yoke of Obedience and Subjection, by Means of Self-denial, which is the truest Cross.

O WHAT a Happiness is it for a Soul to be subdued and subject! what great Riches is it to be poor! what mighty Honour to be despised! what a Height is it to be beaten down! what a Comfort to be afflicted! and finally, what a Happiness of Happinesses, to be crucified with *Christ*! This is that Lot which the Apostle gloried in, Gal. vi. 14. Let others boast in their Riches, Dignities, Delights and Honours; but to us there

is no higher Honour than to be denied, despised, and crucified with *Christ*.

BUT what a Grief is this, that scarce is there one Soul which is willing to be denied for *Christ*, imbracing his Cross with Love. Many are called to Perfection, but few arrive at it; because they are few who embrace the Cross with Patience, Constancy, and Resignation.

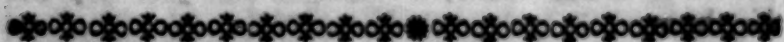
To deny ones self in all Things, to mortify continually all inward Passions, to annihilate ones self in all Respects, to follow always that which is contrary to ones own Will, Appetite and Judgment, are Things that few can do: Many are those that teach them, but few are they that practise them.

MANY Souls have undertaken, and daily do undertake this Way; and they persevere while they keep the sweet Relish of their primitive Fervour; but this Sweetness is scarce done, but presently, upon the overtaking of a Storm of Trouble, Temptation and Dryness, they falter and turn back.

MAY it please GOD, that the Souls which have had Light, and been called to an inward Peace, and by not being constant in Dryness, and Tribulation, and Temptation, have started back, may not be cast into outward Darkness, with him that had not on him a Wedding Garment.

THE Seven-headed Beast of Self-love must be beheaded, in order to get up to the Top of the high Mountain of Peace: This Monster puts his Head every where; sometimes it gets about Relations, which strangely hinder with their Conversation;

tion; to which Nature easily lets itself be led! Sometimes it gets, with a good Look of Gratitude, into passionate Affection, towards the Confessor; sometimes into Affections for Niceties of Honour, which Things stick very close; sometimes it cleaves to spiritual Pleasures, staying even in the Gifts of GOD; sometimes it desires the Preservation of Health, and, with Disguise, its own Profit and Conveniencies: And lastly, it cleaves with a notable Propensity to our own Judgment and Opinion in all Things: All these are Effects of Self-love, and if they be not denied, impossible it is that a Man should ever get up to the Happiness of the loving Union.



## C H A P. II.

*Of the spiritual Martyrdom, wherewith GOD cleanseth the Soul that He unites with Himself.*

**G**OD frequently uses two Ways for Cleansing the Souls which He would unite to Himself: The first is with the bitter Waters of Affliction; the second is with the Fire of an enflamed Love: Sometimes He maketh Use of both.

O THAT thou wouldst understand the great Good of Tribulation! This is that which cleanses the Soul, and produces Patience; this in Prayer inflames it, enlarges it, and puts it upon the Exercise of the most sublime Charity; this rejoices the Soul, brings it near to GOD, calls it to, and gives



gives it Entrance into Heaven : The same is that which tries the true Servants of GOD, and renders them valiant and constant : That is it which makes GOD hear them with Speed : It is that which refines and perfects them, transforming and uniting them in an admirable Manner with the LORD's Humanity and Divinity.

O BLESSED Soul, if thou knewest how to be content in the Fire of Tribulation, and wouldst but let thyself be washed with the bitter Waters of Affliction, how quickly wouldst thou find thyself rich in heavenly Gifts ? How soon would the Divine Bounty make a rich Throne in thy Soul, and a goodly Habitation for thee to refresh thyself in it ?

BUT thou wilt never arrive at this happy State, 'till thou art purified from disordered Passions, Concupiscence, Self-esteem, and many other secret Vices which lie within the very Soul, hindering the peaceable Entrance of that great LORD into it, who would be united with thee.

O HOW much is there to be purified in a Soul that must arrive at the holy Mount of Perfection ! O how naked and denied ought the Soul to be, which would not hinder the Entrance of his LORD, nor his continual Communication !

THIS Disposition of the Soul, must of Necessity be made by the Divine Wisdom. If a Seraph is not sufficient to purify the Soul, how shall a Soul that is frail, miserable, and without Experience, ever be able to purify itself ?

THEREFORE the LORD Himself will dispose thee, by a Way thou understandest not, without any

any other Disposition on thy Side, than a Consent to the internal and external Cross.

**POSSIBLY** thou wilt find within thyself Dryness, Darkness, continual and strong Suggestions, and vehement Temptations of the Enemy: Perhaps thou wilt see thyself so afflicted, that thou wilt not be able to lift up thy Heart, being full of Sorrow and Heaviness, nor do the least Act of Faith, Hope or Charity.

**BUT** though thou shalt see thyself so oppressed, seeming to thyself to be proud, impatient and wrathful; yet these Temptations shall lose their Power upon thee; they have no Place in thy Soul, by the sovereign Gift of inward Strength, which rules in the inmost Part of it, conquering the most affrightning Pain, and the strongest Temptation.

**KEEP** constant, O blessed Soul, keep constant; for it will not be as thou imaginest, nor art thou at any Time nearer to GOD, than in such Cases of Desertion; for although the Sun is hid in the Clouds, yet it changes not its Place, nor a Jot the more loses its Brightness. The LORD permits this to purge and polish thee, to cleanse and disrobe thee of thyself; and thou mayst in this Manner be all His, and give thyself up to Him, as his infinite Bounty is intirely given to thee.

**IT** may be, thy Sorrow will seem insuperable, and thy Afflictions past the Power of Comfort: Thou wilt see thyself begirt with Griefs, and besieged with Sorrows: Strong Temptations will afflict thee, painful Distrusts, and troublesome Scruples; nay, Light and Judgment will forsake thee.

AND

AND although at this Time the LORD will not abandon thee, because it would be impossible to live one Moment without his Help, yet the Succour will be so secret, that thy Soul will not know it, nor be capable of Hope and Consolation ; nay, it will seem to be without Remedy, suffering like condemned Persons the Pains of Hell.

BUT if thou, O blessed Soul, shouldst know how much thou art beloved, and defended by thy LORD, in the Midst of thy Torments, thou wouldst find them so sweet, that it would be necessary GOD should work a Miracle to let thee live. Be constant, O happy Soul, be constant and of good Courage ; for however intolerable thou art to thyself, yet thou wilt be protected, enriched, and beloved by that greatest Good, as if He had nothing else to do, than to lead thee to Perfection ; and if thou dost not turn away, but perseverest constantly, without leaving off thy Undertaking, know that thou offerest to GOD the most accepted Sacrifice ; so that if the LORD were capable of Pain, He would find no Ease 'till He has compleated this loving Union with thy Soul.

If from the Chaos of Nothing, his Omnipotence has produced so many Wonders, what will He do in thy Soul, created after his own Image and Likeness, if thou keepest constant and resigned, with a true Knowledge of thy Nothingness ? Happy Soul, which even when it is disturbed, afflicted, and disconsolate, keeps steady within, without going forth to desire exterior Comfort.

PERSEVERE in Humility, and go not out of thyself to seek Aid ; for all thy Good consists in holding Patience with Rest and Resignation : There wilt thou find the divine Strength to overcome

come so hard a Warfare : He is within thee, that fighteth for thee ; and He is Strength itself.

WHEN thou shalt come to this, Weeping and Lamentation are not forbidden thy Soul, whilst it keeps resigned. Who can bear the LORD's heavy Hand without Tears and Lamentation ? That great Champion *Job*, even he lamented ; so did *Christ* our LORD in his Forsaking ; but their Weepings were accompanied with Resignation.

AFFLICT not thyself, tho' GOD do crucify thee, and make Trial of thy Fidelity : If the Scales were taken from thine Eyes, as they were from St. *Paul's*, thou wouldst see the Necessity of Suffering, as he did, esteeming more the being crucified, than being an Apostle.

THE other Martyrdom in Souls already advanced, is a Fire of Divine Love, which burns the Soul, and makes it painful with the same Love : Sometimes the Absence of its Beloved afflicts it ; sometimes the ardent and welcome Weight of his loving Presence : This sweet Martyrdom always makes it sigh ; sometimes if it enjoys and has its Beloved, for the Pleasure of having Him ; so that it cannot contain itself ; other Times, if He does not manifest Himself, thro' the ardent Anxiety of Seeking, Finding, and Enjoying Him.

So much as Light and Love increases, just so much increases the Grief in seeing that Good absent which it loves so well. To feel it near itself is Enjoyment ; and never to have done knowing and possessing it, consumes its Life. It sees itself swallowed up in a Sea of Love, whilst the powerful Hand that is able to save it is near it ; and yet



yet doth not do it; nor doth it know when He will come, whom it so much does desire.



C H A P. III.

*Inward Mortification, perfect Resignation and Humility, are necessary for obtaining Internal Peace.*

**T**HOU wilt never taste the delicious Manna unless thou overcome thyself; because he who endeavours not to die to his Passions, is not disposed to receive the Gift of Understanding, without the Infusion whereof it is impossible for him to be changed in his Spirit.

**NEVER** disquiet thyself for any Accident: For Inquietude is the Door by which the Enemy gets into the Soul to rob it of its Peace.

**RESIGN** and deny thyself wholly; for though true Self-denial is harsh at the Beginning, it is easy in the Middle, and sweet in the End.

**THOU** wilt find thyself far from Perfection, if thou dost not find GOD in every Thing.

**KNOW** that the pure, perfect and essential Love consists in the *Cross*, in *Self-denial* and *Resignation*, in *perfect Humility*, and in *Poverty*.

**IN** the Time of strong Temptation get close into thy Center, that thou mayst only look at GOD, who keeps his Throne in the Bottom of thy Soul.

TRUE Love is known, with its Effects, when the Soul is profoundly humbled, and truly mortified.

To the Mortified, the Recreation of the Senses is a Sort of Death; they never go to it, unless compelled by Necessity and Edification of their Neighbours.

AN humble and resigned Soul seeks no more than merely to please to GOD, and the holy and loving Spirit teaches it every Thing with its sweet and enlivening Unction.

THERE are some who continually suffer with Patience, Indispositions of Body, of which God takes great Care; but high is their Gift, who by the Strength of the Holy Ghost, suffer both internal and external Crosses with Content and Resignation. This is that Sort of Holiness so much the more rare, as it is more precious in the Sight of God. They who walk this Way, are rare; because they are few in the World who totally deny themselves, to follow *Christ* crucified, with Simplicity of Spirit, through the thorny Ways of the Cross.

A LIFE of Self-Denial is above all the Miracles of the Saints. But although it should be a long Time before thou comest to this State, and thou shouldst think not to have made one Step towards it, yet afright not thyself at this, for GOD uses to bestow upon a Soul that Blessing in one Moment, which was denied it for many Years before.

The spiritual Man that lives by GOD, and in Him, is contented in the Midst of his Adversities, because

because the Cross and Affliction are his Life and Delight.

TRIBULATION is a great Treasure, wherewith GOD honours those that be His: Therefore evil Men are necessary for those that are good; and so are the Devils themselves, who by afflicting us, try to ruin us; but instead of doing us Harm, they do us the greatest Good imaginable.

WITH the Wind of Tribulation GOD separates, in the Floor of the Soul, the Chaff from the Corn.

THOSE are to be pitied, who cannot believe that Tribulation and Suffering is their greatest Blessing. Vain is the Man who doth not suffer, because he is born to toil and suffer; but much more the Friends and Elect of GOD.

THAT the Soul may arrive at perfect Quietness, it ought first to die itself, and live only in GOD, and for Him; and the more dead it shall be in itself, the more shall it know GOD: But if it doth not mind this continual Denying of itself, and internal Mortification, it will never arrive at this State, nor preserve GOD within it, and then it will be continually subject to Judging, Murmuring, Resenting, Excusing, Defending, to keep its Honour and Reputation, which are Enemies to Peace.

How happy wilt thou be, if thou hast no other Thought but to die in thyself? Thou wilt then become not only victorious over thine Enemies, but over thyself: In which Victory thou wilt find pure Love, perfect Peace, and divine Wisdom.

**THE** true Lesson of the spiritual Man, and that which thou oughtest to learn, is to leave all Things in their Place, and not meddle with any but what thy Office may bind thee to: Because the Soul which leaves every Thing to find God, doth then begin to have all in the Eternity it seeks.

**THE** Disesteem of Delights is the Property of a truly mortified Man.

**ENJOYMENT** and internal Peace are the Fruits of the Spirit; and no Man gets them into his Possession if he is not a resigned Man.

**LOOK** not upon other Mens Faults, but thine own: Mortify thyself in all Things, and at all Hours, and by this Means thou wilt get free from many Imperfections.

**MORTIFY** thyself in not judging ill of any Body at any Time; because the Suspicion of thy Neighbours disturbs Purity of Heart, discomposes it, and takes away its Repose.

**NEVER** wilt thou have perfect Resignation, if thou reflectest upon the little Idol of what People say. **GOD** makes greater Account of a Soul internally resigned, than of another that doth Miracles.

**HOLD** it for a true Maxim, That no Body can do a Grievance to a Soul despised by itself, and that is nothing in its own Account.

**HOPE**, suffer, be silent, and patient: Let nothing fright thee: All of it will have a Time to end: **GOD** only is unchangeable: Patience brings every



every Thing. He that hath G O D, hath all Things; and he that hath Him not, hath Nothing.

THERE are two Sorts of Humility; one false, the other true. The false one is theirs, who, like Water which must mount upwards, receive an artificial Submission to rise up again immediately. These avoid Esteem and Honour, that they may be took to be humble: They say of themselves, that they are very evil, that they may be thought good; and tho' they know their own Misery, yet they are loth that other Folks should know it. This is dissembled Humility, and feigned, and nothing but secret Pride.

THEIRS is the true Humility, who never think of it, but judge humbly of themselves; they live and die in G O D; they mind not themselves nor the Creatures; they are constant and quiet in all Things; they suffer Molestation with Joy, desire more of it, that they may imitate their dear and despised *Jesus*; they are contented with what G O D allots them, and are convinced of their Faults with a pleasing Shame; there is no Honour that they look after, nor Injury to disturb them; no Trouble to vex them; no Prosperity to make them proud, because they are immoveable in themselves, with absolute Peace.

TRUE Humility doth not consist in external Acts, in taking the lowest Place, in going poor in Cloaths, in speaking submissively, in condemning thy Ways, calling thyself miserable, to give others to understand that thou art humble: It consists only in the Contempt of thyself, with a low and profound Knowledge, without concerning thyself whether thou art esteemed humble or no, though

though an Angel should reveal such a Thing to thee.

THE Light wherewith the LORD enlightens the Soul, doth two Things; it discovers the Greatness of GOD, and at the same Time the Soul knows its own Stench and Misery, insomuch that no Tongue is able to express the Depth in which it is overwhelmed; it sees that Grace of GOD to be the mere Goodness of Him, and nothing but his Mercy, which is pleased to take Pity on it.

THOU shalt never be hurt by Men or Devil, but by thyself, thy own Pride and Passions; take Heed of thyself, for thou art the greatest Devil of all to thyself.

HAVE no Mind to be esteemed, when GOD incarnate was called Fool, Drunkard, and said to have a Devil. O the Folly of Christians! That we should be willing to enjoy Happiness, without being willing to imitate Him on the Cross!

THE truly humble Man is at Rest and Ease in his Heart; there he stands the Trial of GOD and Men, and the Devil himself, possessing himself in Peace, looking for the pure Pleasure of GOD, as well in Life as Death: Things without do no more disquiet him, than if they never were. The Cross to him, and Death itself, are Delights, tho' he make no such Shew outwardly.

HOPE thou, and desire, and suffer, and die without any Body's knowing it; for herein consists the humble and contrite Love.

THOU.

THOU wilt never be perfectly humble; though thou knowest thy own Misery, unless thou desirest all Men should know it; then thou wilt avoid Praise, embrace Injuries, despise every Thing that makes a fair Shew; and if any Tribulation comes, blame none for it, but judge that it comes from God's Hand, as the Giver of every Good.

FINALLY, if thou wouldst be blessed, learn to despise thyself, and to be despised by others.

ENCOURAGE thyself to be humble, embracing Tribulations, as Instruments of thy Good; rejoice in Contempt, and desire that God may be thy holy Refuge, Comfort, and Protector.

NONE, let him be never so great in this World, can be greater than he that is in the Favour of God; and therefore the truly humble Man despises whatever is in the World, even himself, and puts his only Trust and Repose in God.

THE truly humble Man makes great Way in a little Time, like one that sails before the Wind.

THE truly humble Man finds God in all Things; so that whatever Contempt, Injury or Affronts come to him by Means of the Creatures, he receives it with great Peace and Quiet, as sent from the Divine Hand; and loves greatly the Instrument with which the LORD tries him.

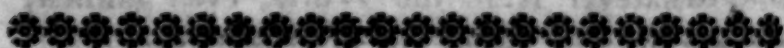
HE is not yet arrived at Humility, that is taken with Praise, tho' he does not desire it, nor seek it, but rather avoids it: Because to an humble Heart, Praises are bitter Crosses, although it be wholly quiet and immoveable.

THE

THE humble Heart is not disquieted by Imperfections, tho' they do grieve him ; because they are against his loving LORD. Nor is he concerned that he cannot do great Things ; for he always feels his own Nothingness, nay, he wonders at himself that he can do any Thing, and thanks the LORD for it, with a true Knowledge that it is GOD that doth all, and remains dissatisfied with what he does himself.

THE truly humble Man doth always find an Excuse to defend him that mortifies him, at least in a sound Intention. Who therefore would be angry with a Man of good Intention ?

So much (nay more) doth false Humility displease GOD, as true Pride does ; because that is Hypocrisy besides.



## C H A P. IV.

### *Of Inward Solitude.*

**I**NTERNAL Solitude consists in the forgetting of the Creatures, in disengaging ones self from them, and in a perfect Nakedness of ones own Will. This is the true Solitude, where the Soul reposes with a sweet and inward Serenity in the Arms of its chief Good.

O WHAT infinite Room is there in a Soul that is arrived at this divine Solitude ! O what inward, what retired, what secret, what spacious, what vast Distances are there within a happy Soul that



is once come to this ? There the LORD converses inwardly with the Soul ; there He fills it with Himself, because it is empty ; cloaths it with Light and with his Love, because it is naked ; lifts it up, because it is low ; and unites it with Himself ; and transforms it, because it is alone.

*O Divine LORD ! How is it that Souls do not go from Earth to this Glory ! How come they to lose so great a Good, through the Love and desire of created Things ! Blessed Soul, how happy wilt thou be, if thou dost but leave all for GOD ! Seek Him only, breathe after none but Him ; let Him only have thy Sighs. Desire nothing, and then nothing can trouble thee ; and if thou dost desire any Good, let it be in such a Manner, that thou mayst not be disquieted if thou missest it.*

IF, with this Liberty, thou wilt give thy Soul to GOD, taken off from the World, free and alone, thou wilt be the happiest Creature upon Earth ; because the Most High has his secret Habitation in this holy Solitude : In this Desert and Paradise is enjoyed the Conversation of GOD ; and it is only in this internal Retirement that that marvellous, powerful and divine Voice is heard.

IF thou wouldst enter into this Heaven, forget every Care and every Thought ; get out of thyself, that the Love of GOD may live in thy Soul.

LIVE as much as ever thou canst abstracted from the Creatures, dedicate thyself wholly to thy Creator, and offer thyself in Sacrifice with Peace and Quietness of Spirit. Know, that the more the Soul disrobes itself, the more Way it becomes clothed with GOD ; and the more empty of itself

self the Soul gets to be, the more the Divine Spirit fills it.

IN this happy Life, GOD gives Himself all to the Creature, and the Creature all to GOD, by an intimate and sweet Union. O how few are there that come to relish this true Solitude !

To make the Soul truly solitary, it ought to forget all the Creatures, and even itself ; otherwise it will never be able to make a near Approach to GOD. Many Men forsake all Things, but they do not leave their own Will, and themselves ; and therefore these truly solitary Ones are so few : Wherefore, if the Soul does not get off from its own Desire, and from its own Will, it never can arrive at this high Felicity.

Go on, blessed Soul ! Go on, without Stop, towards this Blessedness of internal Solitude : See how GOD calls thee to enter into thy inward Center, where He will renew thee, change thee, fill thee, cloath thee, and shew thee a new and heavenly Kingdom, full of Joy, Peace and Serenity.

WHEN once the Soul is mortified, and desires wholly to deny its Appetites ; when once it efficaciously embraces internal and external Mortification, and is willing to die heartily to its Passions and its own Ways, then GOD uses to take it alone by itself, and raise it to a compleat Repose, where He sweetly, and inwardly infuses his Light, his Love, and his Strength, inflaming it with a true Disposition to all Virtue.

THERE the Soul, raised and lifted up, becomes united to its greatest Good, without costing it any Trouble or Pains : There, in that supreme Region

gion and sacred Temple of the Soul, that greatest Good takes it Complacency, manifests itself, and creates a Relish from the Creature, in a Way above all human Understanding: There only the pure Spirit, who is GOD, rules it, and gets the Mastership over it, communicating to it those Sentiments which are necessary for the most pure and perfect Union.

SOMETIMES the LORD gives greater Light to the Understanding, sometimes greater Love to the Will. There is no Need here for the Soul to take any Pains or Trouble; it must receive what GOD gives it, and rest united as He will have it; because He is LORD, He possesses and fills it, and works in it powerfully and sweetly, insomuch that before it is aware of this so great Mercy, it is gained, convinced, and changed already.

THE Manner that thou must use on thy Part, to fit thyself for this perfect Prayer, is a total and absolute Consignment of thyself into the Hands of GOD, with a perfect Submission to his holy Will, to be busied according to his Pleasure and Disposition, receiving what He ordains with an even and perfect Resignation.

HOLINESS does not consist in forming deep and subtle Conceits of the Knowledge and Attributes of GOD, but in the Love of GOD, and in Self-Denial: Therefore it is often observed, that Holiness is more amongst the Simple and Humble, than among the Learned. How many poor old Women are there in the World, which have little or nothing of human Science, but are rich in the Love of GOD! How many Divines do we see that are over Head and Ears in their vain Wisdom,

and yet very bare in Things of true Light and Charity.

REMEMBER that it is always good to speak like one that learns, and not like one that knows.

ALTHOUGH Divine Wisdom does commonly belong to the Humble and Simple, yet Men of Learning are not incapable of it, if they do not seek themselves, nor set any great Value upon their own artificial Knowledge; but more, if they can forget it, as if they never had it, and only make Use of it in its own proper Place and Time, for Preaching and Disputing when their Turn comes, and afterwards give their Minds to the simple and naked Contemplation of God.

THE Study which is not ordered for God's Glory only, is but a short Way to Hell; not thro' the Study, but the Pride which begets it. Miserable is the greatest Part of Men, whose Study only is to satisfy the unsatisfiable Curiosity of Nature.

MANY seek God, and find Him not; because they are more moved by Curiosity, than sincere, pure, and upright Intention.

HE that does not endeavour the total Denying of himself, can never be capable of the Light of the Spirit.

THE Spirit of Divine Wisdom fills Men with Sweetness, governs them with Courage, and enlightens those who are subject to its Direction. Where the Divine Spirit dwells, there is always Simplicity, and a holy Liberty: But Craft and Double-mindedness, Fiction, Artifices, Policy, and worldly



worldly Respects, are Hell itself, to wise and sincere Men.

GOD is more satisfied with the Affection of the Heart, than that of worldly Science. It is one Thing to cleanse the Heart of all that captivates and pollutes it, and another Thing to do a thousand Things, tho' good and holy, without minding that Purity of Heart, which is the main of all for attaining Divine Wisdom.

A SOUL perfectly resigned, is already arrived to such a Happiness, that it neither wills nor desires any Thing but what its Beloved wills; it conforms itself to this Will in all Emergencies, as well in Comfort as Anguish, and rejoices also in every Thing to do the Divine Good Pleasure.

THERE is nothing but what comforts it; nor doth it want any Thing but what it can well want: To die, is Enjoyment to it; and to live, is its Joy: It is as contented here upon Earth, as it can be in Paradise; it is as glad under Privation, as it can be in Possession; in Sicknes as it can be in Health; because it knows that this is the Will of its LORD. This is its Life, this its Glory, its Paradise, its Peace, its Repose, its Rest, its Consolation and highest Happiness.

THIS Soul, that is entered into the Heaven of Peace, acknowledges itself full of GOD and his supernatural Gifts; because it lives grounded in a pure Love, receiving equal Pleasure in Light and Darkness, in Night and Day, in Affliction and Consolation: Thro' this holy and heavenly Indifference, it never loses its Peace in Adversity, nor its Tranquility in Tribulation, but sees itself full of unspeakable Enjoyments.

AND altho' the Prince of Darknes makes all the Assaults of Hell against it, with horrible Temptations, yet it makes Head against them, and stands like a strong Pillar; no more happening to it by them, than happens to a high Mountain in the Time of Storm and Tempest.

THE Valley is darkened with thick Clouds, fierce Tempests of Hail, Thunder, Lightning and Hail-stones, which looks like the Picture of Hell; at the same Time the lofty Mountain glitters, by the bright Beams of the Sun, in Quietness and Serenity, continuing clear like Heaven, immovable, and full of Light.

THE same happens to this blessed Soul; the Valley of the Part below, is suffering Tribulations, Combats, Torments, Martyrdoms and Suggestions; and at the same Time, on the lofty Mountain of the higher Part of the Soul, the true Sun casts its Beams; it enflames and enlightens it, and so it becomes clear, peaceable, resplendent, quiet, serene, being a mere Ocean of Joy.

So great therefore is the Quiet of this pure Soul, which is gotten up to the Mountain of Tranquility, so great is the Peace of its Spirit, so great the Serenity and Chearfulness within, that a Glimmering of GOD does redound even to the Outside of it.

BECAUSE in the Throne of Quiet are manifest the Perfections of spiritual Beauty; here the true Light of the secret and divine Mysteries of our holy Faith, here perfect Humility, even to the amplest Resignation, Chastity, Poverty of Spirit, the Sincerity and Innocency of the Dove, Modesty, Liberty, and Purity of Heart; here the Forgetfulness

getfulness of every created Thing, joyful Simplicity, heavenly Indifferency, continual Prayer, perfect Disinterestedness, a most wise Contemplation, a Conversation in Heaven; and lastly, the most perfect and serene Peace within; of which this happy Soul may say, what the Wiseman said of Wisdom, that all other Graces came in Company with her.

THIS is the hidden Treasure; the blessed Life, the happy Life, the true Life, and Blessedness here below. O thou lovely Greatness, that passest the Knowledge of the Sons of Men! O excellent supernatural Life, how admirable and unspeakable art thou! O how much dost thou raise a Soul from Earth, which loses in its View all Things of the Vileness of Earth! Thou art poor to look upon, but inwardly thou art full of Wealth; thou seemest low, but art exceeding high; in a Word, thou art that which makest Men live a Life divine here below. Give me, O LORD, a Portion of this heavenly Happiness and true Peace, that the World is neither capable of understanding nor receiving.

*End of the Spiritual Guide.*



...and all other cases...

THE  
 1. The first of these is the fact that the  
 2. second is the fact that the  
 3. third is the fact that the  
 4. fourth is the fact that the  
 5. fifth is the fact that the  
 6. sixth is the fact that the  
 7. seventh is the fact that the  
 8. eighth is the fact that the  
 9. ninth is the fact that the  
 10. tenth is the fact that the

6 JY 44



AN  
EXTRACT  
FROM TWO  
SERMONS

PREACHED

At CRIPPLEGATE,

BY

Dr. *SAMUEL ANNESLEY.*



EXTRACT

PART TWO

SEYMOUR



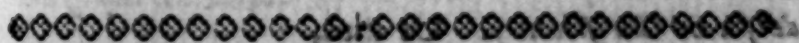
DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON

JOHNSON



A  
S E R M O N.

*How may we be universally and exactly  
conscientious?*



ACTS xxiv. 16.

*And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a  
Conscience void of Offence toward GOD, and to-  
ward Men.*

**I**N this Text are these six Things singu-  
larly considerable:

**I.** HERE is the Index to the Book of  
Conscience; the Eye to the Portraiture  
of a Christian, that according to your several Stand-  
ings, looks upon the Business, the Time, the Man-  
ner and the Cause of it.

*Herein]*

*Herein*] In this, *i. e.* in this Business; *q. d.* here I am arraigned as a Malefactor, charged with Sedition, Schism, and Heresy, in this my Conscience acquits me. Again,

*Herein*] In or at this Time, *q. d.* It is but five Days ago, since I was struck on the Mouth for this Defence, and I see those present that so rashly and illegally censured me; yet now before more equal Judges, I bring the same Defence. Again,

*Herein*] In this Manner, *q. d.* *My Manner of Life from my Youth, which was at the first among mine own Nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews, which knew me from the Beginning (if they would testify) that I lived after the straitest Sect of our Religion: And I am not conscious to myself of any Crime in Respect of their Law, either in my Judaism or Christianity. Or thus,*

*Herein*] *q. d.* *I have Hope towards GOD—that there shall be a Resurrection of the Dead, both of the Just and Unjust; and therefore with me it is a very small Thing that I should be judged of you, or of Man's Judgment; yea, I judge not mine ownself, for I know nothing by myself, yet am I not hereby justified; but He that judgeth me is the LORD: And therefore having an Eye to the Resurrection, and last Judgment, I exercise myself to have, &c.*

2. HERE is the Act with the Quality included, [*I exercise*] I am musing, and exercising my Mind; I am learning, and busying my Thoughts: The Word also notes Industry and Endeavour, Pains and Labour, *q. d.* this is my Meditation, my Study, my Work and Employment, to get, to keep and use a Conscience void of Offence.

3. CON-



3. CONSIDER the Subject of this Exercise [*myself*] it was himself, not only his Hearers; he took on him *the Care of all the Churches*, but he would not have it charged upon him, that he kept others Vineyards and neglected his own; he would be sure so to exercise himself, that he might not by any Means, *when he had preached to others, himself be a Cast-away.*

4. CONSIDER the Object of this Exercise, and that is [*Conscience*] and pray consider the Manner of expressing himself [*to have a Conscience*] to be Owner of a good Conscience: All Men have a Conscience, but we may say of most, Conscience hath them: They have a Conscience, as they have a Fever: Conscience is troublesome, and disquiets them; they cannot sin so freely, as if they had no inward Gripe, and therefore they had rather be rid of their Consciences, than be thus troubled with them. But the Apostle would have a Conscience to commune with, he would do nothing but what he is willing his Deputy-Judge shall approve of.

5. CONSIDER the Quality of the Subject [*void of Offence*] *i. e.* without any Thing which will not endure the Scrutiny of both Divine and Human Judgment. The Distribution notes the Entireness, Exactness, and Excellency of his Gospel-Carriage, in his Religion towards GOD, and in his Conversation among Men. He made it his Business to live purely before GOD, and religiously among Men.

6. CONSIDER the Continuance of this Exercise [*always*] it is not only by Fits and Starts, when in some good Mood, or under some Pangs of Conviction; it is not only when arrested by Sicknes, or affrighted by the Apprehension of Death; but *always, at all Times.*

THE Words thus opened, the General Case that lies upon me to resolve, is this: How we may be universally and exactly conscientious? Universally, in Respect of Things; exactly, in Respect of Manner.

To answer this, (so far as I can crowd it into a Sermon) I shall present you with four Things.

1. WHAT Conscience is.

2. WHAT its Objects.

3. WHAT its Offices.

4. WHAT are the Kinds of Consciences; wherein various Directions are necessary, for Remedies and Rules, which when laid together, will resolve the Case.

1. CONSCIENCE is Man's Judgment of himself, *i. e.* of his Estate and Actions, as they are subjected to the Judgment of GOD.

FOR Conscience, the *Hebrews* ordinarily make Use of two Words, *viz.* [*Heart*] and [*Spirit*]. But in *English* (as also in the *Greek* and *Latin*, whence we borrow it) it is called [*Conscience*]. Knowledge with another, which excellently sets forth the scriptural Nature of it, as *Job* xvi. 19. *My Witness is in Heaven*; and *Rom.* ix. 1. *I say the Truth—my Conscience also bearing me Witness in the Holy Ghost*. In both Places, *q. d.* GOD witnesseth with my Conscience: Conscience is placed in the Middle, under GOD, and above Man. I will close this with *Brochmand's* Description of Conscience; to be a Kind of silent Reasoning of the Mind, whose definitive Sentence is received by some Affection

*Affection of the Heart, whereby those Things which are judged to be good and right, are approved of with Delight; but those Things which are evil, are disapproved with Sorrow: GOD hath placed this in all Men, partly to be a Judgment and Testimony of that Integrity to which Man was at first created, and of that Corruption that followed Sin; partly that GOD may have a Tribunal erected in the Breasts of Men to accuse Delinquents, and to excuse those that do what is good and right.*

2. THE Object of Conscience is very various: Conscience hath great Employment, and much Business with the whole Man, and with all his Actions; it is like those living Creatures in the *Revelation*, all over Eyes; it looks to the Understanding, whether our Wisdom be carnal or gracious; to the Will, whether it go beyond, or fall short in Ability of good Performances; to the Affections, whether the Entertainment or Refusal of the Gospel be the Matter of greatest Joy or Sorrow: It pries into all our Actions both towards GOD and Man. Towards GOD, whether in general our Estate be good; in special, whether our Service be inward and spiritual, or only outward and formal. More particularly, it surveys all our Duties, whether we pray in Faith; whether we hear with Profit; whether through our Baptism, we can go unto GOD as unto an Oracle; whether in the LORD's Supper we have singular Communion with *Christ*; in short, whether we do and will stick close to Religion; as knowing, that if Conscience do not steer right, Religion will be shipwreck'd. Thus Duties towards GOD are the great Object of Conscience: But Duties towards Man are the secondary, and like unto it. Towards Man in our whole Conversation: Particularly, that we be obedient to Rulers, (and that which is in one Place charged upon us

for Conscience Sake, is in another Place commanded for the LORD's Sake;) in short, that we be just in all our Dealings, avoiding all justly offensive Things, Words, Thoughts; that we express singular Charity, especially to Souls; and this in Prayer, when we can do nothing else, and Conscience doth not only do all this at present urging to Duty, or shooting or tingling under the Commission of Sin, but it foresees Things future, provoking to Good, and cautioning against Evil; and also looks back upon Things past with Joy or Torment, so that it is easier to reckon what is not the Object of Conscience, than what is: In a Word, *Every Thing of Duty and Sin is the Object of Conscience.*

3. THE Offices of Conscience are likewise various. In general, the proper Office of Conscience is to apply that Light which is in the Mind, to particular Actions or Cases. The Light which is in the Mind, is either the Light of Nature, or rather Preventing Grace; or the Light of Divine Revelation. By the Light of Nature, I understand those common Notions, which are written in the Hearts of Men, which (as a Brand pluck'd out of the common Burning) are the Relicks of the Image of God after the Fall. Not only Scripture, but Experience evidenced, that those which are practical *Atheists* say unto God, *Depart from us, we desire not the Knowledge of thy Ways*; yet cannot get rid of his Deputy, their Conscience: They carry a Spy, a Register, a Monitor in their Bosom, that doth accuse and trouble them, they cannot sin in Quiet. Those that are without, or reject the Sunshine of Scripture, yet they cannot blow out God's Candle of Conscience. By Divine Revelation, I mean, both the standing Rule of Scripture, and God's extraordinary Discoveries of Himself, whether by Dreams, or Visions, or Prophecies, or other Spiritual



Spiritual Communications; all which, though (if they be from GOD) they are according to Scripture; yet the former are afforded upon particular Providences, and the last are the universal Privileges of particular Favourites: But it is the Office of Conscience to apply all these, and that it doth by a Kind of a practical Syllogism. *e. g.*

WHOSOEVER *believeth*, (*i. e.* accepteth of Christ as LORD and Saviour) *shall be saved*: But I accept of Christ as LORD and Saviour: Therefore shall I be saved. Or,

WHOSOEVER committed Sin (*i. e.* makes a Trade of Sin) *is of the Devil* (*i. e.* the Child of the Devil.) But I make a Trade of Sin: Therefore I am a Child of the Devil.

IN the first Proposition, you have the Dictate of Conscience: In the second you have the Testimony of Conscience; and in the Conclusion, you have the Judgment of Conscience. In the first the Power of Conscience is very great, so great that it can do any Thing but make Evil Good; for it can make an indifferent Action good or evil; and it can make a good Action evil: Therefore in Things necessary, it doth so bind, that no human Laws can loosen. Thus far the Dictate of Conscience. In the Testimony of Conscience, Conscience examines and tries our Actions: This in Scripture is called, a returning into a Man's own Heart, a thinking of our Ways, a speaking to our Heart, a laying Things to Heart, a setting our Heart upon a Business, an Examination and Trial of ourselves; and thence the Conclusion is inferred from the Premises according to our Apprehension of the Rule and Account of our Actions. Yet this is worthy of special Observation, that though both the Premises

misses be undeniably true, yet there is nothing more ordinary, than for not only wicked, but gracious Persons (though upon different Grounds) to deny the Conclusion; and the Truth is, without the Spirit's Assistance by Way of Conviction to the Wicked, and Relief to the Godly, neither of them will prove any better Logicians, than still to deny the Conclusion.

GRACELESS Persons will not conclude against themselves: For,

(1.) THEY will not weigh the Cogency of any Scriptural Argument.

(2.) THEY have suck'd in other self-flattering Conclusions: And,

(3.) THEY are willing to put a Cheat upon themselves: So these will not conclude against themselves.

AND on the other Hand, gracious Persons dare not conclude themselves so happy as the Scripture represents them.

(1.) THROUGH the Prevalency of Temptations, *Satan* frights them from their Comforts.

(2.) THEY think it is too good to be true, especially considering,

(3.) THEIR Sense of Unworthiness: What! they pass a Sentence of Approbation upon their Actions! No, they dare not. In short, the only Remedy I shall commend to both Sorts is this, *viz.* Beg of GOD to persuade thy Heart to close with convincing Truth.

CHRISTIANS,

CHRISTIANS, do but suffer and help your Conscience to do its Office, and then *shall you have Rejoicing in yourselves alone, and not in another*, i. e. you will find Cause of rejoicing in the Testimony of your own Conscience, and not in others thinking you to be better than you are, nor in thinking yourselves to be better than others. Thus you have the Offices of Conscience. I come in the last Place to speak of,

4. THE Kinds of Conscience which are commonly reduced to these four, *viz.* Good and Quiet; Good and Troubled. Evil and Quiet; Evil and Troubled. But intending the Resolution of the Case before me, in speaking to Conscience under the several Kinds of it, I shall speak to eight Kinds of Consciences. The two first, *viz.* the Sleepy and the Seared Conscience are peculiar to the worst of Men. The four next, *viz.* the Erring, Doubting, Scrupulous and Trembling Consciences, are almost indifferent to Good and Bad; only the two former have a greater Bias to Bad, and the two latter have a greater Tendency to Good: But the two last Kinds, *viz.* the Good and Honest, and the Good and Quiet Consciences, are peculiar to GOD's Children. In treating of these, I shall endeavour to acquaint you with the Nature of each; how to cure the Evil, and how to obtain the Good; and hereby the Application will be entwisted with the Explication throughout my Discourse.

I. THE First, and one of the worst Kinds of Consciences in the World, is the Sleepy Conscience; such is the Conscience of every unconverted Person that is not yet under Horror; their Spirit, i. e. their Conscience is asleep; that as bodily Sleep bindeth up all the Senses and animal Spirits, so this spiritual

(or rather unspiritual) Sleepiness, bindeth up the Soul from all Sense of the Evil of Sin, and Want of Grace, and therefore in Conversion *Christ* doth awaken the Conscience. The Disciples of *Christ* have their Spirits waking, when their Bodies are slumbring. *Christ* complains of Unkindness, that his Spouse sleeps in the Morning, when He knocks for early Entertainment; but the Unconverted let *Christ* stand knocking all the Day, 'till Supper Time; they will spend the Day with their Lusts, and if *Christ* will knock and wait 'till the Day of their Life be almost spent, then they will pretend to open: But how long must God call, *How long wilt thou sleep, O Sluggard? When wilt thou arise out of thy Sleep?* And they will answer, *Yet a little Sleep, a little Slumber, a little folding of the Hands to Sleep.* The plain Truth is, though wicked Men cannot quite stifle their Consciences; yet their Consciences do but as it were talk in their Sleep, and they take no more Notice of them, than they do of their Dreams.

CAUSES of a sleepy Conscience are (besides the Sluggishness of our depraved Natures)

I. A SPIRITUAL Intoxication; all unconverted Persons are drunk with the Love of Sin, and therein behave themselves like *Solomon's* Drunkard, that lies down to Sleep in the Heart of the Sea, or upon the Top of a Mast, in the very Midst of the greatest Danger: He doth that daily which *Jonah* did once, run away from God, and then composeth himself to Sleep, when God is pursuing him with Judgments; and dreams of nothing but Impunity, and Happiness. Love of Sin is the Devil's Opium, whereby he casts the Conscience into a dead Sleep, that no Arm but that of Omnipotency can waken it. He meets with something in the World, which



he likes better than the holy Ways of GOD, and therefore will not seek GOD; GOD's Ways are always grievous to him—He hath said in his Heart, *I shall not be moved*—GOD hath forgotten, He hideth his Face, He will never see it—He contemns GOD, and saith in his Heart, *Thou wilt not require it*. They wink, and then conclude GOD doth not see them.

2. CARNAL Conceits of Grace and Heaven. At the best, human Wisdom is their highest Guide, their supreme Oracle; in their mishapen Apprehensions of their Need of Mercy, they are willing to be flattered, that it may be had without such Severities in Religion, as they are unwilling to undertake. Why should they be wiser than their Neighbours? All Men are not Fools. Men as wise, and as learned, neither press nor practise such Strictness; and do you think they have not a Care of their Souls? They do not doubt but they shall do as well as the best. Though, poor Souls, they know *that wide is the Gate, and broad is the Way, that leadeth to Destruction, and many there be which go in thereat; because strait is the Gate, and narrow is the Way, that leadeth unto Life, and few there be that find it*. Mark that, [*that find it*] He doth not say that enter into it, but *that find it*. Those that do not walk in the Way of Holiness, it is impossible they should ever find it. The Gate doth not lead to the Way, but the Way to the Gate. Do not think to get to Heaven first, and learn Heavenly-mindedness after; yea, Heaven must suffer Violence: Striving is the Condition of entering. Rouze up therefore, and shake off your worldly Wisdom, your ignorant Self-love, your Abuse of Mercies, your Contempt of GOD, and your Forgetfulness of Death and Judgment. But how shall we do this?

I. THE first Remedy I shall commend, is Consideration. Let the Subject of thy Consideration be what thou wilt, (only I could wish it may relate to Eternity, whither thou art posting) and I shall not doubt of the Success. Let me for once insert a Relation I heard between the preaching and the transcribing of this Sermon. *The Father of a Prodigal left it, as his Death-Bed Charge, unto his only Son, to spend a Quarter of an Hour every Day in retired Thinking, but left him at Liberty to think of what he would, only engaged him to spend a Quarter of an Hour in Thinking. The Son having this Liberty to please himself in the Subject, sets himself to the Performance of his Promise; his Thoughts one Day recall his past Pleasures, another contrive his future Delights; but at length his Thoughts became inquisitive what might be his Father's End in proposing this Task: He thought his Father was a wise and good Man, therefore surely he intended and hoped that he would sometime or other think of Religion: When this leaven'd his Thoughts, they multiplied abundantly, neither could he contain them in so short a Confinement, but was that Night sleepless, and afterwards restless, 'till he became seriously religious. O that I could persuade you to go and do likewise.*

2. OBSERVE what Means thou shunnest as too startling, and make Use of them for thy Awakening. This, with the Blessing of God, will savingly awaken thee.

II. THE second Kind of Conscience proposed, is, The Seared Conscience: Such is theirs who have given up their Names to *Christ*, but lift up their Heel against Him, of which the Apostles speaks, 1 Tim. iv. 2. *Having their Consciences seared with an hot Iron, i. e. having a corrupt and putrified Conscience, that hath the Devils Brand-Mark upon it.*  
Plainly,

Plainly, a seared Conscience, is a rotten, venomous, ulcerate, pestilent, filthy, gangrenate Conscience, that doth not perform any of his Offices, but is even past feeling. To this Rank of profligate Sinners, I refer all those that frequent (as well as those that reject) Ordinances, that make a Profession (as well as that hate the Profession) of Religion, yet have a Reserve of Sin, which they will not part with.

THE Causes of a seared Conscience, are Conscience-wasting Sins on Man's Part procuring it, and Divine Withdrawing from the Sinner on GOD's Part inflicting it. As there are some bodily Diseases that follow bodily Weakness, so this Soul-Disease is the peculiar Punishment of Sins against Knowledge. Methinks that Text is dreadful, *Rom. i. 28. As they did not like to retain GOD in their Knowledge, GOD gave them over to a reprobate Mind.* It is observable, the oftner they rebelled against the Light, the more severely GOD punished them, with that which they counted Impunity, viz. He gave them up to their Swing of 1. Natural Lust, 2. Unnatural, and 3. Of all Unrighteousness. Custom of Sinning, takes away Conscience of Sinning.

FOR Cure; seriously set yourselves against those peculiar Ways of Sinning which have brought you to this. You know them; there is not any one that hath a seared Conscience, but he doth, or easily may know how it came so: Your Work, in some Respect, is not so large as in Case of the sleepy Conscience: It is but one or two Sorts of Sins that are eminently mischevius to your Souls in this Case. Though a seared Conscience is worse than a sleepy Conscience; yet as it is more easily discernible, so it is but reasonable you should more speedily

speedily and vigorously set upon the Cure. Take Heed of accounting any Sin small, lest at last you account not any Sin great. I will commend one Text to you, and close this Particular, *Ezek. xxiv. 13, 14. In thy Filthiness is Lewdness: Because I have purged thee, and thou wast not purged, thou shalt not be purged from thy Filthiness any more, 'till I have caused my Fury to rest upon thee. I the LORD have spoken it, it shall come to pass, and I will do it, I will not go back, neither will I spare, neither will I repent.* Sirs, GOD hath been your Physician, hath used Variety of Remedies: If nothing will prevail, but you will industriously singe your Consciences, to make them senseless; as sure as GOD is true, He will make you sensible of your Sin by everlasting Burnings.

III. AN Erring Conscience is that which judgeth otherwise than the Thing is. Conscience is sometimes deceived through Ignorance of what is right, by apprehending a false Rule for a true, an Error for the Will of GOD; sometimes through Ignorance of the Fact, by misapplying a right Rule to a wrong Action. Conscience evil informed, takes human Traditions, and false Doctrines, proposed under the Shew of Divine Authority, to be the Will of GOD. A famous Instance you have of this in *Jeroboam's* Case: He fears that if the People should go up to sacrifice at *Jerusalem*, he should lose his Kingdom; this puts him upon Enquiry, whether there should not be a double Sanctuary, as well as a double Kingdom? Hereupon a Council is called, flattering Prophets come, they have Dreams and Visions, worthy of their Affections, suitable to their Purpose: A Decree is made, *q. d.* it is sufficient that you have hitherto gone up to *Jerusalem*, now behold your Gods, these Calves are like the Cherubims of the Sanctuary, which are as mini-  
string



string Spirits before the Face of GOD. (That these Calves had the Shape of Cherubims, you may gather by comparing Scriptures, that which is called the Face of an Ox in one Place, is called the Face of a Cherub in the other). This seems to the People a satisfying Warrant for them readily to follow the King's Commandment. I might add another Instance of the good old Prophet, who was plausibly seduced to his bodily Destruction.

Now it is a great Question (among the Papists especially) *Whether, and how far an erring Conscience binds?*

ONE of their most learned Casuists peremptorily determines, that the Law of an erring Conscience is not dispensable by GOD Himself: Others, that it is good to follow an erring Conscience, when it is agreeable to Reason: Others, that a right and an erroneous Conscience both bind, though in a different Respect; a right Conscience, as it is conformable to the Law of GOD; an erring Conscience, as it is thought to be the Law of GOD.

THE plain Truth is, Error cannot bind us to follow it: An erring Conscience may so bind, that it may be a Sin to go against it; but it can never so bind, as it may be a Virtue to follow it. To follow an erring Conscience, is for the blind Sinner to follow his blind Conscience, 'till both fall into the Ditch. The Violation of Conscience is always evil, and the following of an erring Conscience is evil; but there is a middle Way that is safe and good, viz. the informing of Conscience better by GOD's Word, and following of it accordingly.

THE Causes of an erring Conscience (besides original Sin, the Effect whereof is Blindness in the Under-

Understanding; and the just Judgment of God upon Persons for not entertaining, obeying, and loving the Truth, as it is in *Jesus*) are reduceable to these three Heads.

1. **NEGLIGENCE** of learning the Will of God, through Slothfulness, and Love of Ease, and low Esteem of the Ways of God.

2. **PRIDE** whereby a Man is ashamed to consult others, and to be taught by them. Those that are sincerely conscientious, are not free from a Kind of proud Modesty, in being shy of making Enquiry into practical Cases; there is something of Pride in their Bashfulness to discover their Ignorance, in asking of Questions for Conscience-Sake. But those that are ungodly, arrogate so much to their own Judgment, that (to speak their own Boasting) they know as much as any Man can teach them: But as wise as they are, a wiser than they calls them Fools; and their Folly misleads them.

3. **PASSION**, or inordinate Affection about that whereof we are ignorant. This warpeth our Consideration; for he that seeks Truth with a Bias, will run counter when he comes near it, and not find it, though he come within Sight of it.

You may gather the Remedies from the Opposites to these three Causes of Error. (1.) Be industriously diligent to know your Duty. (2.) Be humbly willing to receive Instruction. And (3.) Let not your Affections out-run your Judgment.

BUT there is one Rule I shall commend, which if you will conscientiously improve, you shall never be much hurt by an erring Conscience; and I dare appeal to your own Consciences, that it is your indispensable

dispensable Duty, you must use it, and it is so plain and easy you may use it.

Do what you know, and GOD will teach you what to do. Do what you know to be your present Duty, and GOD will acquaint you with your future Duty, as it comes to be present. Make it your Business to avoid known Omissions, and GOD will keep you from feared Commissions.

THIS Rule is of great Moment, and therefore I will charge it upon you by express Scripture. *Psalms xxv. 4. Shew me thy Ways, O LORD, i. e. those Ways wherein I cannot err: Teach me thy Paths, i. e. that narrow Path which is too commonly unknown, those Commands that are most strict and difficult: Verse 5. Lead me in thy Truth, and teach me, i. e. teach me evidently, that I may not be deceived; so teach me, that I may not only know thy Will, but do it. Here is his Prayer, but what Grounds hath he to expect Audience? For Thou art the GOD of my Salvation, q. d. Thou, LORD, wilt save me, and therefore do not refuse to teach me. On Thee do I wait all the Day, i. e. the whole Day, and every Day: Other Arguments are couched in the following Verses; but what Answer? Verse 9. The Meek will He guide in Judgment, the Meek will He teach his Way, i. e. those that submit their Neck to his Yoke, those that are not conceited that they can guide themselves better than He can guide them, He will teach them his Ways; in necessary, great, and weighty Matters they shall not err. Again, *Prov. ii. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9. If thou criest after Knowledge, and liftest up thy Voice for Understanding: If thou seekest her as Silver, and searchest for her as for hid Treasures: Then shalt thou understand the Fear of the LORD, and find the Knowledge of GOD. For the LORD*  
 Vol. XXXVIII. C c giveth*

*giveth Wisdom: Out of his Mouth cometh Knowledge and Understanding. He layeth up sound Wisdom for the Righteous: He is a Buckler to them that walk uprightly. He keepeth the Paths of Judgment, and preserveth the Way of his Saints. Then shalt thou understand Righteousness, and Judgment, and Equity, and every good Path, q. d. Be but as diligent to get Knowledge, as a covetous Man to get Money, and GOD will certainly give you such Knowledge of his Ways, as shall preserve you from Error, and will teach you how to behave yourselves both towards GOD and Man. One Scripture more, that in the Evidence of three Witnesses this Rule may be established, John vii. 17. If any Man will do his Will, he shall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of GOD, or whether I speak of myself, q. d. Hinder not yourselves from learning Truth, through Fear of Error; for you shall never want the Spirit's Guidance, while you practically follow his Conduct.*

IV. A DOUBTING Conscience is that, which, with Trouble and Anxiety, suspends its Judgment, not knowing which Way to determine. Doubtfulness of Conscience, is that Ambiguity of Mind, which consists in a standing (or rather in a wavering) Ballance, neither assenting nor dissenting. To speak strictly, a doubting Conscience is no Conscience, but only improperly, as a dead Man may be said to be a Man. Conscience is a Judgment of something done, or to be done: But where there is no Assent, there is no Judgment; and therefore so far as it may be called a Conscience, it is an evil Conscience.

THE Apostle tells us, *Whatsoever is not of Faith is Sin.* By Faith there we must understand that Persuasion and Security of Mind, whereby we believe and determine, that such a Thing pleaseth or displeaseth



displeaseth GOD, is lawful or forbidden : It is not spoken of justifying Faith, as if Men sinned in eating or not eating, because their Sins were, or were not pardoned. In all Duties then that belong to Practice, we must be unweariedly diligent to perceive the Truth, that Doubtfulness may be driven away; for the more certain Knowledge we have of those Things we do, the more confident we may be in the doing of them, and the more joyful afterwards. What therefore is the Cause of Doubting, that it may be banished ?

THE Causes of Doubting, which I shall speak of briefly, (to say nothing of our Ignorance and Weakness) are these two.

1. EITHER Want or Equality of Reasons; that when we poise and weigh Things most impartially, yet we are not able to come to a Determination, but the Mind is still in Suspense.

2. DOUBTS arise from some peculiar Reasons. General Reasons are not sufficient to make a conscientious Doubt; there must be Intention of Mind upon some particular Reasons that must be duly weighed, else we may be said to doubt of what we scarce think of. They have not so good as a doubting Conscience, whose Doubts lurk in Generals, who have only some cloudy Notions from without, or foggy Mists from within, which they take no due Course to clear. Too many deal with their Doubts, as Cripples with their Sores, which might easily be healed, but they make them a begging Argument; so the Formalists have always their Doubts and Fears about Things general, or of lesser Moment, which they might easily answer, and employ themselves in Things more profitable. Shall I tell you how? You cannot expect I should resolve

the almost infinite Particulars of doubtful Cases; but I will propose two Remedies, which, with the Blessing of GOD upon the conscientious Improvement, will give you Light for Smoke, in Things both sacred and civil.

1. ABOUT lesser Matters this Rule commonly holds good, *viz.* In Things doubtful, take the safest Course. In Things doubtful ordinarily one Way is clear, take that, *e. g.* I question whether such a Recreation be lawful, but I am sure it is not unlawful to let it alone; therefore to prevent the After-reckonings of Conscience, I will not meddle with it, but this will not reach all Cases; therefore,

2. BRING the Case to a Point, wherein the Stress of your Doubt lies; but be sure it be a Case of Conscience, (not of Interest, or Prejudice) such as you are unreservedly willing to be resolved in, that you can in Prayer (as it were) bring GOD a Blank to write what He pleaseth. And (2.) Pare off all those Demurs, and carnal Reasonings which may puzzle, but can never satisfy you. These Things premised, (3.) Write down your Case as nakedly as you can, with the Grounds of your Hesitation: In your Writing, make two Columns; on the one Side write those Reasons you judge cogent [for] on the other Side, the Reasons you judge of Moment [against] that whereof you doubt: Compare these together, and poise them impartially, you will find that your perplexed Thoughts have another Aspect when written, than when floating, and yourselves will be able to resolve your own Doubts; but if not, this will ripen the Boil, where it doth not break and heal it, you will be ready for Advice.

IN your consulting of others, do it with Expressions equivalent to those of the *Jews to Jeremy*, (but with more sincere Affections) *Jer. xlii. 2.—Pray for us unto the LORD thy GOD.—Verse 3. That the LORD thy GOD may shew us the Way wherein we may walk, and the Thing that we may do.—Verse 5. The LORD be a true and faithful Witness between us, if we do not, according to all Things, for the which the LORD thy GOD shall send thee to us.—Verse 6. Whether it be Good, or whether it be Evil, (i. e. seem it never so disadvantageous or dangerous to us) we will obey the Voice of the LORD our GOD, to whom we send thee, that it may be well with us, when we obey the Voice of the LORD our GOD.*

If you cannot out of these collect a satisfying Resolution, (yet the Case will be brought into a narrower Compass) be unwearied therefore to take the same Course again, apply yourselves to the same Persons, or others; [one] Case thus thoroughly resolved, will be singularly useful for the scattering of all future Doubts in all other Cases: And though this may prove a Business of Time, yet suspend your acting 'till you are satisfied: Though the Duty in question be of greatest Moment, yet while you can approve your Heart unto GOD, that it is neither Love of Sin nor Ease, it is neither slighting of *Christ* nor Duty, but a restless Inquisitiveness to know GOD's Mind in the Case, your Suspence (at the worst) will be reckoned among your Infirmities, and be compassionately overlooked. To conclude this, *whereto ye have already attained, walk by Rule exactly; and if in any Thing you be doubtfully minded, GOD shall reveal even this unto you.*

V. A SCRUPULOUS Conscience, is that which doth determine a Thing to be lawful, yet scarcely

to be done, lest it should be unlawful. There is some Anxiety, Reluctancy, and Fear in the Determination. A Scruple in the Mind is as Gravel in the Shoe, it vexeth the Conscience, as that hurts the Foot. A Scruple is a hovering Kind of Fearfulness, arising from light Arguments that hinder or disturb the Soul in Performances of Duties.

THE Difference between a doubting Conscience and a scrupulous Conscience, is this; A doubting Conscience, assents to neither Part of the Question; a scrupulous Conscience consents, but with some Vexation.

I SHALL name but two Causes (forbearing to mention our Ignorance and Pride) which have a great Influence upon all Kind of Error, Doubts, and Scruples.

1. THE first Cause of Scrupulousness is natural, viz. a cold Complexion, which is always timorous; those that are phlegmatick and melancholly, are naturally fearful.

2. The second and the chief Cause is Temptations. *Satan*, if he cannot keep the Heart a secure Prisoner will do his utmost to overwhelm it with Fears and Jealousies, and Suits his Temptations to our Temper. He doth not tempt the Riotous with Rewards, nor the Passionate to Fearfulness; he doth not tempt the Melancholly to Security, nor the Phlegmatick to great Atchievements.

1. THE first Remedy I shall commend to you, is this, viz. Be not discouraged with your Scruples: But keep off from the other Extreme also; do not indulge them; they tend to much spiritual Damage: They (1.) are Occasions of Sin. (2.)  
They



They render the Ways of God more strait, horrid, and impossible. (3.) They retard the Work of Grace. (4.) They hinder Chearfulness in the Service of God. (5.) They quench the Spirit. (6.) They unfit us for any Duty. These may all serve for Arguments to strive against them: But yet, be not discouraged, for God is pleased through over-powering Grace to make good Use of them. (1.) To further Mortification. (2.) To restrain us from worldly Vanities. (3.) To abate Pride. (4.) To make us more watchful. (5.) To make us more spiritual. (6.) To (little less than) force us to live more upon *Christ*: Yet.

2. Do what possibly you can to get rid of your Scruples: But if you cannot get rid of them, act against them. It is not only lawful, but necessary to go against a scrupulous Conscience, or you will never have either Grace or Peace. Should a Christian forbear praying, or receiving the Sacrament, every Time his scrupulous Conscience tells him he had better wholly omit the Duty, than perform it in such a Manner, he would soon find, to his Sorrow, the Mischief of his Scruples; but Grace will not leave him to his scrupulous Humour. Be resolute therefore, and tell the Devil, that as you do not perform your Duty at his Command, so neither will you omit it as his Bidding. Do by religious Duties, as they that are afraid to go by Water, or to go over a narrow Bridge, they cease to fear when they have gone often over: So by the Performance of Duties, your scrupulous Fears will vanish. Act against your Scruples, (1.) Positively, by disputing them down, and opposing their Reasons. (2.) Negatively, by slighting of them, and not hearkning to them. In short, in all necessary known Duties; always do what

what you can, when you can't do what you would.

VI. THE Trembling Conscience is that which is disquieted, and distressed with the (apprehended) Hazard of the Soul's Condition, that doth nothing but accuse, and condemn, and afright the Soul. This, of any, needs least Enlargement, for every one that feels it, is rhetorical enough in expressing it.

There is a twin Cause of a Trembling Conscience, *viz.* Sense of Sin, and Fear of Wrath. Never Sin like mine! never Heart like mine! never Case like mine! Such are the constant Complaints of a troubled Spirit.

FOR the Cure, I can give but Hints. Never keep the Devil's Counsel. Break through all carnal Reasonings, to acquaint yourselves with some faithful spiritual Physician, or experienced Christian, that may shew you the Methods of Divine Grace, and what others have successfully done that have been just in your Condition. This premised,

I. NOTWITHSTANDING (yea in the Midst of) your saddest Complaints, bless GOD for an awakened Conscience, while there is Hope of Cure. It is a good Rule, be not too quick in administering Comforts; but we cannot be too quick in provoking to Thankfulness. If you can at present be thankful that you are out of Hell, you shall ere long be thankful for Assurance of Heaven. This Rule may seem strange, but (upon Experience) its Practice will discover its Excellency.

2. OBSERVE.

2. OBSERVE, it is GOD's usual Method to bring the Soul through these Perplexities to the most solid spiritual Peace. *Augustine* excellently expresseth his spiritual Conflict, how GOD followed him with severe Mercy, 'till he made him instant for thorough Holiness. GOD kept him trembling, that he might leave dallying. Believe it Christian, GOD is now storing thee with Experiences, which will be a useful Treasury throughout thy Life. Therefore,

3. Do but hold on in the vigorous Use of all Means of Grace, and reckon GOD's keeping thee from turning thy Back upon his Ways, when thou hast no Comfort in them, for Evidences, that the Spirit is at Work in thy Heart; and for Pledges, that he will perfect his own Work, *e. g.* Count thy growing Importunity in Prayer, (or sorrowful Complaint for the Want of it) a gracious Answer of that Prayer, which thou thinkest is disregarded. Count thy Watching for a Word to direct and support thee, a notable Efficacy of that Word, which thou countest doth thee no Good. Count thy restless Dissatisfaction with every Thing on this Side GOD, to be a Token from GOD, that He will be thy satisfying Portion; and in the Interim, ask those well grown Christians that are now in the spiritually-sensible Embraces of Divine Love, whether they are not glad that GOD formerly took that Course with them, which He now takes with thee, to bring them to these Joys. Be encouraged therefore; though thou hast a sorrowful Seed-Time, thou shalt have a joyful Harvest.

THUS having spoken of those Kinds of Conscience that are either evil or troublesome, and how to cure them. I now come to those desirable Kinds

Kinds of Conscience, that next to Deity and heavenly Glory, admit no Hyperbole in their Commendation, viz. the good honest Conscience, and the good peaceable Conscience, and how to obtain them.

VII. THAT Conscience, is good, in Respect of its Integrity, which gives a right Judgment of every Thing, according to the Word of God. I grant, that the Law of Nature binds, Ecclesiastical Laws bind, and Political Laws bind, but the Word of God is the principal Rule, which precisely binds the Conscience in Regard of its Author; *There is one Law-giver, who is able to save and to destroy. Fear not them which kill the Body, and are not able to kill the Soul; but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both Soul and Body in Hell.*

VIII. THAT Conscience is a good peaceable Conscience that excuseth, absolveth, and comforteth as it ought, that Conscience that is pacified by the Blood of *Christ*. But how shall we get such Consciences? Christians, be but persuaded to practise these Directions, and your Consciences will certainly be right, and seasonably be comfortable.

I. TAKE Heed of every Sin, count no Sin small. Screw up your Obedience to every Command to the highest. Ferret out every Sin, to the most secret Corruption. When you have set your Watch against the first Risings of Sin, beware of the Borders of Sin, shun the very Appearance of Evil. Venture not upon Occasions or Temptations to Sin; those that dare venture upon Occasions, as Children upon the Ice, shall find there is always Danger, never any Good. Morality itself will  
teach



teach you this Lesson, to keep clear of Evil, if ever you would either be good, or enjoy it; but seeing, as on the one Hand, there cannot be Truth of Grace, and Truce with Sin, so on the other Hand, while Grace is imperfect, Sin will have (and make us feel it hath) a Being. Therefore,

II. FORTHWITH set upon the healing Duty of Repentance, and upon every Slip into Sin speedily renew it. O that I could snatch you out of your State of Impenitency, and persuade you to daily actual Repentance. To those that are resolved to delay their Repentance, I have sometimes given Counsel suitable to such Resolutions, *viz.* The next Sickness that seizeth upon you chide it away, tell your Disease you cannot have while to be sick; say to it as *Paul to Felix, Go thy Way for this Time, when I have a convenient Season I will call for thee.* If Death summon thee, tell it, you will not obey its Summons, you have other Business to do than to die; you have Estates unsettled, and Children unprovided for, and you would repent too before you die, but you cannot yet have while. If this will not serve, but die you must; charge your Souls before they go out of your Bodies, not to come near the Prison of Impenitent Persons, charge your Friends to lock up your Bodies so safe, or bury them so deep, that all the Angels in Heaven may not be able to drag them to Judgement. But alas my Brethren! do you not think this wild Counsel? And well you may. Yet unless you could do something equivalent to this you are mad to defer your Repentance. What, cannot I keep Pain from my Body, nor the Use of Reason in my Soul one Minute, and shall I continue in my Impenitency, that will damn me the very Moment of my Death? I beseech you therefore, for your own Souls Sake, that you may  
not

not be guilty of the worst Self-murder, *i. e.* Soul-murder, speedily set upon Repentance. And those of you that have repented, let your Repentance daily supplant Sin, by taking it by the Heel certainly to lame it, 'till you can take it by the Head utterly to kill it. And be very careful never to return to Sins repented of. That you may be serious in both these.

III. COMPOSE thyself to live as under God's Eye, live as in the (more than) sensible Presence of the jealous GOD. Remember, all Things are naked and bare before Him, you cannot deceive Him, for He is infinite Wisdom, you cannot fly from Him, for He is every where; you cannot bribe Him, for He is Righteousness itself. Keep therefore fresh Apprehensions of GOD in your Thoughts; speak, as knowing GOD hears you; walk as knowing GOD is nearer to you than you are to yourselves. The LORD is with you, while you are with Him, *i. e.* you shall enjoy his favourable Presence, while you live in his awful Presence. There is one *Psalm*, which it were well if Christians would do by it, as *Pythagoras* by his golden Precepts, every Morning and Evening repeat it; it is *David's* Appeal of a good Conscience unto GOD, against the Calumnies of Men. *Pf. cxxxix.*

3. O LORD, *Thou hast searched me and known me,*  
*q. d.* O LORD, Thou art the Heart-searching GOD, who perfectly knowest all the Thoughts, Councils, Studies, Endeavours and Actions of all Men, and therefore mine; Verse 2. *Thou knowest my Down-sitting, and mine Up-rising, Thou understandest my Thought afar off,* *q. d.* Thou knowest my Rest and Motion, and my Thoughts in both. Verse 3. *Thou compassedst my Path, and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my Ways,* *q. d.* thou fannest and winnowest me. *i. e.* thou discussest and tryest me to the utmost. Verse 4.

*For there is not a Word in my Tongue, but lo, O LORD, Thou knowest it altogether; q. d. I cannot speak a Word, though never so secret, obscure, or subtle, but thou knowest, what, and why, and with what Mind it was uttered. Verse 5. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine Hand upon me, q. d. Thou keepest me within the Compass of thy Knowledge, like a Man that will not let his Servant go out of his Sight. I cannot break away from Thee. Verse 6. Such Knowledge is too wonderful for me, it is high, I cannot attain unto it; q. d. The Knowledge of thy great and glorious Majesty and Infiniteness, is utterly past all human Comprehension. Verse 7. Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy Presence? Whether can I flee from Thee, whose Essence, Presence, and Power is every where. Verse 8. If I ascend up into Heaven, Thou art there; if I make my Bed in Hell, behold Thou art there; There is no Height above Thee, there is no Depth below Thee. Verse 9. If I take the Wings of the Morning, and dwell in the utmost Parts of the Sea; If I had Wings to fly as swift as the Morning Light, from the East to the West, that I could in a Moment get to the furthest Parts of the World. Verse 10. Even there shall thy Hand lead me: And thy right Hand shall hold me; Thence shall thy Hand lead me back, and hold me fast like a Fugitive. Verse 11. If I say, surely the Darkness shall cover me: Even the Night shall be Light about me, Though Darkness hinders Man's Sight, it doth not Thine. In a Word, look which Way you will, there is no Hiding-Place from GOD. Job xxxiv. 21, 22. For his Eyes are upon the Ways of Man, and He seeth all his Goings; there is no Darkness nor Shadow of Death, where the Workers of Iniquity may bide themselves. Therefore Christians, do nothing but what you are*

VOL. XXXVIII. D d willing

willing GOD should take Notice of, and judge in yourselves whether this be not the Way to have a good and quiet Conscience?

IV. BE serious and frequent in the Examination of your Heart and Life. This is so necessary to the getting and keeping of a right and peaceable Conscience, that it is impossible to have either without it. There are some Duties and Graces, like those Parts of the Body, that may supply the Defect of other Parts; or like some Drugs in Physick, which when they cannot be had, some of the like Nature may serve: But this is like those, the Defect whereof nothing else can supply. The Heathens have found out this Rule. *Pythagoras* gives it as a Precept; and *Seneca* backs it by the Example of *Sextius*, who every Night, before he composed himself to Sleep, asked himself, What Evil hast thou this Day healed? What Vice hast thou resisted? Wherein art thou better? O how sweet is that Sleep which follows such a Recognition of himself, who made every Night a Scrutiny into the Words and Deeds of the whole Day. He would neither pass by, nor hide any Thing from himself; he so ript up his Faults, that he would not pardon them to himself, without a Self-charge not to repeat them. Have you gone thus far? Certainly, my Brethren, not to out-strip them is inexcusable. It is a Shame to see the Carelessness of most, that are better acquainted with any Thing than themselves; there are many that know the Histories of a thousand Years past, and yet cannot tell you the Particulars of their own Lives; Men well acquainted with the Mysteries of Arts and Nature, but utterly ignorant of the Secrets of their own Souls. How few are there amongst us, that can say as *David*, *I have thought on my Ways, and turned my Feet unto thy Testimonies?*



*Testimonies?* Nay, we have a thousand Matters to think on all the Day long; the Night too, the Week, the Year; but who questions with his own Heart, What am I? What do I? How live I? Is the Course I follow good and lawful? Is that which I omit, my Duty, or not? Is God my Friend? Am I his? What Hope have I of Heaven? Say, I die To-morrow, To-day, this very Hour, where is my Assurance I shall be saved? What Apology can I make against the Accusations of *Satan* and my Conscience? Will *Christ* be my Advocate, when I shall stand in Judgment? Do I grow in Grace, or do I decay? Am I better this Year than I was the last? What Sins have I conquered now, that held me in Combat then? What Graces have I obtained now, that I had not then? Christians, do you do thus? If you do, that is not enough, unless you do it frequently, daily. Every Evening ere you sleep, review your Carriage in the Day, what you have done, or spoken, or thought, that is but so much as indecent; whether your Hearts have been intent upon Religion, and indifferent to the World. Briefly, have special Care of two Portions of your Time, viz. Morning and Evening; the Morning to forethink what ought to be done, and the Evening to examine whether you have done what you ought.

V. BE much in Prayer, in all Manner of Prayer, but especially in secret Prayer. Do not nonsuit yourselves by the Love of Sin, and you shall certainly be heard when you pray for Grace: Believe it, Christian, it is not thine inevitable Weakness, nor thy sensible Dulness, nor thy lamented Rovings, nor thy opposed Distractions; it is not any, nor all these can shut out thy Prayers, if thou dost not regard Iniquity in thy Heart: Therefore be encouraged, it is the Voice of your

Beloved that faith, *Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever you shall ask the Father in my Name, He will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked Nothing (to what you might ask) in my Name: Ask and ye shall receive, that your Joy may be full.*

VI. LET every Action have Reference to your whole Life, and not to a Part only; propose some End to yourselves in every Thing, and let all your lesser and subordinate Ends be plainly reducible to the great End of your Living. The Emphasis of the Apostle's Exhortation is very great, *Exercise thyself unto Godliness, q. d.* Be as diligent in Religion, as thou wouldst have thy Children that go to School be in Learning: Or thus; let thy whole Life be a Preparation for Heaven, like the Wrestlers or Combatants Preparation for Victory: Or thus, strip thyself of all Incumbrances, that thou mayst attend unto Piety: Pleasures may sooth thee for a while, but they have an Heart-aching Farewell. Thou mayst call thy Riches Goods, but within a few Days what Good will they do thee? Men may flatter thee for thy Greatness, but with GOD thy Account will be the greater. Therefore always mind that, which will always be Advantage.

VII. LIVE more upon *Christ* than upon inherent Grace. Do not venture upon Sin, because *Christ* hath purchased a Pardon; that is a most horrible and impious Abuse of *Christ*: For this very Reason there was no Sacrifice under the Law for any wilful Wickedness, lest People might think they knew the Price of Sins, as those do that truck with Popish Indulgencies and Pardons. But that none may be overwhelmed with the Sense of their Unworthiness, be it known to you, *We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous;*

*Righteous*; and our Salvation is better, safer, more for GOD's Glory, and our Comfort, in his Hand than in ours.

VIII. BE every Way Nothing in your own Eyes; it is the humble Soul that thrives exceedingly, and alas what have we to be proud of? Look we either at our Constitution, or Conversation; our Conception sinful, our Birth penal, our Life toilsome, and our Death we know not what; but all this is nothing to the State of our Soul. A Stoick could give this Rule, If any one tell you of another speaking Evil of thee, do not excuse thyself, but say, he did not know me, or else he would have spoken worse. A Convert, when he once comes to be sensible of Sin, sees more Cause to be weary of his Life, than proud of his Graces. To rise and fall; to see others outrun us that set out after us; to recover that Time for Communion with GOD, which we trifle away in unobserved Impertinencies; surely for such Persons to be low and vile in their own Eyes, deserves not to be called Humility, tho' the Contrary be worse than devilish Pride. Be persuaded therefore to believe of yourselves *Agur's* Words of himself, *Prov. xxx. 2. Surely I am more brutish than any Man, &c. q. d. I do not make Use of my Reason; Verse 3. I have not the Knowledge of the Holy, q. d. my Knowledge of holy Mysteries is very little; in Comparison of my Ignorance, nothing.* Be as willing that others should speak Ill of you, as you are to speak Ill of yourselves; and be as unwilling that others should commend you, as you are to commend yourselves.

IX. ENTERTAIN good Thoughts of GOD whatever He doth with you, whatever He requires of you, whatever He lays upon you. We never ar-

rive to any considerable Holiness, or Peace, 'till we lose ourselves in Deity, 'till our Understandings be filled with Admiration, 'till our Wills be in a sober Sense divine; 'till all our Affections be, in a spiritual Sense, transported. When we can at once unriddle GOD's Methods of Grace, and make good Constructions of GOD's Methods of Providence, making a spiritual Improvement of both, then we are not far from being universally and exactly consciencious. There is one Thing yet wanting, and that is implied in this, but it must be expressed also.

X. Do all you do out of Love to GOD. Spiritual Love-sickness is the Soul's healthfullest Constitution. When Love to GOD is both Cause, Means, Motive and End of all our Activity in the Business of Religion, then the Soul is upon the Wing towards its Rest: Then is our Love to other Things regular, when the alone Goodness of GOD moves us to love them; as the alone Respect to Health makes me use Physick, the Means hath no proper Goodness distinct from the Goodness of the End; those Means which were profitable, tho' they remain unchanged in themselves, yet they become unprofitable by the alone Change of the End; *e. g.* Health being recovered Physick is unprofitable, which while we were infirm was profitable; so we are not to love any Means without Relation to the End, because it is contrary to the Purity of that Love which we owe to GOD, for we ought so to love GOD, that with Him, or under Him we love nothing else, but all Things only in Him, because otherwise we do not love Him with our whole Heart. *e. g.* In Mens loving their Wives, and Wives their Husbands; in Parents loving their Children, and Children their Parents, it a rare Pitch to love all these  
in



in GOD; that is, to advance our Love to GOD by them, and so far as any of them draw off our Love to GOD, to say to them, as *Christ to Peter*, *Get thee behind Me, Satan, thou art an Offence unto Me.*

LOVE is extended to Good: the more good therefore any Thing is, the more it is to be beloved: *But Thou O LORD my GOD* (saith *Bradwardine*) *art the Good of every Good, Good above all Things that are good, a Good most infinitely infinite: How much therefore should I rationally love Thee? Should not my Love be proportionably infinite? I would I could so love Thee; but how shall I that am so very little and finite, love Thee infinitely! And yet without so loving Thee, how will there be kept any due Proportion in loving Thee, who dost infinitely exceed all other lovely Things? I ought to love Thee infinitely as to the Manner, tho' I cannot as to the Act of my Love: i. e. I ought to love Thee finally for Thyself; and may love Thee in some Sort infinitely, as to the Act, both intensively and extensively; in some Sort intensively, i. e. more intensely, more firmly, more strongly than any finite Good, because I love them but for Thee. In some Sort extensively, by comparing all Things, how many, or how great soever with Thee, and loving Thee before all, and above all, that I had rather all Things in the World, and myself too to have no Being, than once to offend Thee. But, LORD, Thou lovest thy Friends in an unspeakable Manner more than they can love Thee. O therefore Thou great LORD, Thou great Good, that fillest Heaven and Earth, why dost Thou not fill my very little Soul? O my Soul that art so little, so miserable, why dost thou not open all thy little Doors? Why dost thou not extend thy utmost Capacity, that thou mayst be wholly possess'd, wholly satiated, wholly ravish'd with the Sweetness of so great Love; especially, seeing*

ing thou art so very little, yet nothing less will satisfy thee. O therefore my most loving GOD, I beseech tell me what may most effectually draw out my Love to Thee, considering what Prevention of Love, what good Things I receive from Thee, infinite in Greatness, infinite in Multitude: It is a Wonder that any one can think of these Things, and not be wholly swallowed up of Love, wholly turned into Love: But I see, LORD, it is easier to speak these Things, and to write them, than to do them. Thou therefore, most good and most powerful LORD, to whom nothing is difficult, give I beseech Thee, that I may more easily do these Things in my Heart, than utter them with my Mouth: Open, I beseech Thee, thy most bountiful Hand, and enable me, that nothing may be more easy, nothing more sweet, nothing more delightful, than most effectually, and most affectionately to fulfil that which I speak about loving of Thee. LORD give me Leave a little to presume above my Hope, and to plead with Thee about thy magnificent Goodness: Human Friendship will not give the Repulse to a poor, wanting, begging Friend; O therefore, most liberal LORD, help me that I may love Thee. Christians, it is worth your While to make it your Business to climb up to this: This you will find to be a compleating Rule, an effectual Means, and a singular Exercise of exact and consciencious Walking.

I SHALL briefly name two Arguments or Motives, to persuade the Use of these Directions.

I You cannot possibly get rid of your Conscience, therefore be persuaded to get a good one. There is nothing more common than for wicked Men to do what they can to extinguish Conscience: They flatter it with carnal Reasoning, they bribe it with mock Devotions, they wound it with

heinous

heinous Provocations, they fear it with customary Wickedness, they trample it under Foot by Sinning in Despight of it; they run away from it, and will not endure to hear it, by Diversions; and yet they can sooner turn their Souls out of their Bodies, than Conscience out of their Souls; yea, amongst all these Indignities, it doth but watch its Opportunity, when it will be heard, when it will make that which was done perhaps forty Years ago, as if it had been but Yesterday. What ails the great Emperors of the World, that cause their Terror in the Land of the Living, what ails them to tremble with inward Conviction? Is it a vain Fear? Why then do they not shake it off? Is it the Fear of Men? No, they are above human Punishments: Is it the Fear of Shame? No, the Sin perhaps was secret. What is the Matter? O, they are haunted by the Fury of their own Consciences. Would wicked Men but tell what they sometimes feels, even then when they out-face a ministerial or friendly Reproof, there would need no more to be said to evidence, that a Conscience you will have, which will first or last do its Office.

2. YOUR own Conscience will be your best Friend, or your greatest Enemy (of any Creature) unto Eternity. There is no greater Riches, no greater Pleasure, no greater Safety than a good Conscience. Let the Pressures of the Body, the Hurry of the World, the Affrightments of *Satan* be never so great, they cannot reach the Conscience. A good Conscience singularly cheers the dying Body, joyfully accompanies unto God the departed Soul; triumphingly presents both Soul and Body unto the desired Tribunal. There is no more profitable Means, nor surer Testimony, nor eminent Conveyor of eternal Happiness than a good

good Conscience. And on the Contrary, there is no greater Torment than an evil Conscience; tho' its gentler Checks may be disregarded, its louder Clamours will make you tremble. O, Sirs, what will you do, when Conscience shall upbraid you with your Abuse of Mercies, Incorrigibleness under Judgments, Contempt of *Christ*, and Hatred of Holiness? You cannot now endure to hear what Conscience hath to say; how will you endure it unto Eternity? If one that killed his own Father, could not, in some *Egyptian's* Account, be more cruelly punished, than by being compelled to behold the murdered Body for three Days, what a Torment will it be to be forced to behold every Sin, with every Aggravation to Eternity? Here in bodily Sickness there are some Intervals to revive the Spirits; but hereafter there will not be a Moment's Intermision of unexpressible Horror to Eternity. The Conscience shall roar under infinite Wrath, and the Sinner shall be kept from Annihilation under it by infinite Power.

THUS I have in a weak Manner performed my Promise in speaking to several Kinds of Consciences, with Remedies and Rules, which laid together, will, I think, amount to sufficient Instructions, *How we may be universally and exactly conscientious*, viz. 1. Get your Consciences awakened from their natural Lethargy. 2. Preserve them tender from acquired Searedness. 3. Rectify their Errors as you would get cured of Blindness. 4. Resolve their Doubts as you would a Claim to your Lands. 5. Break from your Scruples as from Thieves on the Road. 6. Lay your Head in *Christ's* Bosom to cure your Trembling. And then for the (7) Integrity, and (8) Quiet of your Consciences: Observe the Rules proposed, as punctually



punctually as you would Physicians Bills in a tedious Sickness. 1. Avoid Sinning as you would a Train of Gunpowder. 2. Be as quick in your Repentance as in the Cure of a Plurisy. 3. Live under the apprehended Presence of the jealous GOD. 4. Examine your Hearts, as Princes sift out Treason. 5. Pray for suitable Grace, as starving Persons cry for Food. 6. Let every Action be as an Arrow shot at a Mark. 7. Think of GOD as of a wise Physician. 8. Be as vile in your own Esteem, as you are in the Eyes of a captious Enemy. 9. Live upon *Christ*, as the Child in the Womb lives upon the Mother. 10. Love GOD (as near as possibly you can) as GOD loves you.

BUT if these Rules, though thus contracted, be too many, and too long to be always remember'd, that you may not be over-charged with that which should never be forgotten, I shall commend to you some (spiritually) chymical Extractions, and (if I might so express it) Spirits of Directions, that may be to your Souls in your Pilgrimage towards Heaven, as your Ship-Provisions in a Sea-Voyage, generally sufficient, when others cannot be had. Plainly practise these Memorials of Direction in all your conscientious Walking.

I. CONSULT Duty, not Events. There is nothing in the World for us to do, but to mind our Duty. Curious Speculations that tend not to Holiness, may be reckoned among your Superfluities; but misgiving Predictions of what may or will befall you in the Discharge of your Duty, may be reckoned among your grosser Iniquities; and to venture upon Sin to avoid Danger, is to sink the Ship for Fear of Pyrates, and must be reckoned amongst your greatest Follies, your worst of Sins.

Is

Is not their Reason (questionless their Conscience is) dangerously disordered, that practically argue, this Way of Duty may probably procure Man's Displeasure, and therefore to prevent that, I will take the Course which will certainly procure God's Displeasure? Besides, By-ways will not lead you to the Place you aim at; but on the Contrary, keep your Consciences free from being violated, and you cannot be miserable. O how calm and quiet, as well as holy and heavenly would our Lives be, had we learnt but this single Lesson; to be careful for nothing, but to know and do our Duty, and leave all Effects, Consequences, and Events to God! The Truth is, it is a daring Boldness for silly Dust to prescribe to infinite Wisdom, and to let go our Work, to meddle with God's: He hath managed the Concernments of the World, and of every individual Person in it, without giving Occasion to any one to complain, for above these five thousand Years; and doth He now need your Counsel? Therefore let it be your only Business to mind Duty. But how shall I mind my Duty? Take a second Memorial.

II. WHAT Advice you would give to another, take yourselves. The worst of Men are apt enough to lay Burdens on other Mens Shoulders, which if they would take upon their own, they would be rare Christians. *e. g.* The very Outcry of those that revile Godliness, who deal by the Miscalriages of Professors, as the *Levite* by his Concubine, quarter them and divulge them; even they expect that those which make a strict Profession of Religion, should be beyond Exception blameless; and they [even they] scorn those that make any Defection from their professed Strictness. And on the other Side, those that are holy, they expect

pect, that even graceless Persons should bear Re-  
proof, receive Instruction, and change the Course  
of their Lives. In middle Cases then, between  
these Extremes, what Exactness will serious Chri-  
stians require, where the Byas of their own Cor-  
ruptions doth not misguide them? Wherein this  
Rule is too short, add a third.

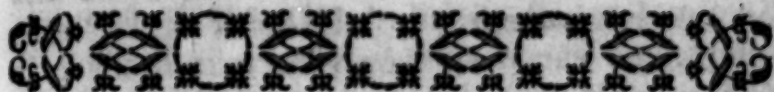
III. Do Nothing on which you cannot pray for  
a Blessing. Where Prayer doth not lead, Repen-  
tance must follow; and it is a desperate Advent-  
ure to sin upon the Hopes of Repentance. Every  
Action (and Cessation too) of a Christian that is  
good, and not to be refused, is sanctified by the  
Word and Prayer. It becomes not a Christian to  
do any Thing so trivial, that he cannot pray over  
it, and if he would but bestow a serious ejacula-  
tory Prayer upon every occurrent Action, he would  
find, that such a Prayer would cut off all Things  
sinful, demur all Things doubtful, and encourage  
all Things lawful. Therefore do nothing but  
what you can preface with Prayer. But these  
Rules are all defective, I will therefore close with  
an Example that is infinitely above Defects.

IV. THINK, and speak, and do what you are  
persuaded *Christ* Himself would do in your Case,  
were He upon the Earth. The Heathens proposed  
unto themselves the best Examples they had, and  
therefore let us follow the best of ours. There  
are many rare Examples in Scripture; but we  
may say of them, as it is said of most of *David's*  
Worthies, whose highest Commendation was  
with this Diminution, *they attained not unto the*  
*first three*. I propose therefore now neither great  
nor small, but the *King of Saints*: It becomes a  
Christian rather to be an Example, than to fol-  
low one: But by imitating of *Christ*, you will

come as near as it is possible to the first three, for your Fellowship shall be *with the Father, and with his Son* Jesus Christ, thro' the Spirit of Holiness, who alone can teach you what it is to abide in *Christ*, who was, and is, and ever will be our absolute Copy. O Christians! how did *Christ* pray, and redeem Time for Prayer? How did *Christ* preach, out of whose Mouth proceeded no other but gracious Words, that his Enemies could not but admire Him? At what Rate did *Christ* value the World? What Time did *Christ* spend in impertinent Discourse, who made *their Hearts burn within them*, whom He occasionally fell in Company with? How did *Christ* go up and down doing Good to Man, and always those Things that were pleasing to GOD? Beloved, I commend to you these four Memorials, to be as so many scarlet Threads upon every Finger of the Right-hand one, that you may never put forth your Hand to Action, but these Memorials may be in your Eye. 1. Mind Duty. 2. What is anothers Duty in your Case is yours. 3. What you can't say, the Blessing of the LORD be upon it, do not meddle with. But above all, as soon forget your Christian Name (the Name of a Christian) as forget to eye *Christ*; and whatever Entertainment you meet with from the profane World, remember your Exemplar, and *follow his Steps*; who did no Sin, neither was Guile found in his Mouth; who when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatned not; but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously.







A

## S E R M O N.

*How Ministers or Christian Friends may,  
and ought to apply themselves to sick  
Persons, for their Good, and the Dis-  
charge of their own Conscience?*

JOB xxxiii. 23, 24.

*If there be a Messenger with him, an Interpreter,  
one among a thousand, to shew unto Man his Up-  
rightness: Then he is gracious unto him, and saith,  
Deliver him from going down into the Pit, I have  
found a Ransom.*

THESE Words are Part of *Elihu's* Discourse  
uttered by Way of Reprehension and Con-  
viction to *Job*, and by Way of Vindica-  
tion and Apology for GOD in his Dealings with  
Men; and although he premiseth this, that GOD  
giveth no Account of his Matters, Verse 13. yet  
he doth give an Account for GOD, and makes a  
a Defence, or gives a Rationale of GOD's Pro-  
ceedings

ceedings with Men; where he shews, that it is not Man's Torment or Ruin that GOD desires, but his Reformation: And that it may appear how sincerely and fervently he desires it, he shews that there are several Ways which GOD useth, which are most likely to produce it.

1. HE speaks to Men in Dreams, Verse 15, &c.
2. WHEN that will not do, by Afflictions, Verse 19, &c.
3. To make those Afflictions more intelligible and more effectual, He sends a Messenger. This is the Business of the Text; wherein you may observe two Parts.

(1.) A SUPPOSITION, Verse 23. *If there be a Messenger with him, an Interpreter.*

(2.) A POSITION, Verse 24. *Then He is gracious to him.*

THE Words may be called, the sick Man's Cordial, or his Restorative; wherein you may observe, 1. The Patient, expressed in the Word *him*. 2. The Disease, his Danger and Misery—he is going down to the Pit. 3. The Physician, who is described, 1. By his Office, *a Messenger*. 2. By his Work, *an Interpreter*. 3. A rare Man, *one of a thousand—multis ē millibus unus*. 4. The Physick, *to shew unto a Man his Uprightness*. 5. The Cure, *then He is gracious*.

*If a Messenger*] an Angel, i. e. by Office, not by Nature, for so the Word is oft used in Scripture; and so it is most fitly understood here, both because GOD did then, and still doth generally use the Ministry

Ministry of Men rather than Angels, in counselling and comforting afflicted Men; and because he is called one of a thousand, a Phrase which implies, as his Excellency and Fitness for that Work, so the Insufficiency of most of the same Kind for it; which must not be charged upon the meanest of God's elect Angels.

*An Interpreter*] viz. of the Mind and Will of God: *Christ* is the great Interpreter, *John* i. 18. but when He ascended on high gave forth this Gift, and left us Interpreters in his Stead, *Eph.* iv. 11, &c.

*To shew unto a Man his Righteousness*] i. e. Man's own Righteousness; for it is the Sin and Unrighteousness of a Man which causeth his Disease, and the Sense of that Sin which makes his Disease bitter and formidable: Sin is the Sting of every Affliction. Now all Cures are wrought by Contraries; when therefore a faithful Messenger or Minister of *Christ* having made the sick Man sensible of his Sin, and afterwards of the Pardon of it, and when he comes to discover to him his Righteousness, Uprightness, Holiness, *then God is gracious*; although it is not impossible that here may be a Reference to *Christ's* Righteousness also.

*Then He (i. e. God) is gracious*] God is always gracious in Himself, in his own Nature; but He is gracious to none, but in his own Way, and upon his own Terms. God is not gracious to unrighteous and unholy Persons; but when Men return from their Sins, *God is gracious, and saith, Deliver him*—He saith so to his Minister, He gives him Commission to deliver him, i. e. to declare him to be delivered.

*I have found a Ransom*] I have received Satisfaction, *i. e.* in the Death of my Son, which was a Ransom satisfactory for the Sins of his People. And farther, it is by Virtue of this Ransom that God's People are delivered, not only from Hell, but from any other Miseries. And well saith God, *I have found a Ransom*; for it is beyond the Wit of Men or Angels to find out such an admirable Way for Man's Salvation. Thus you have had the Coherence, Division, and Sense of the Words.

THERE are several Doctrines which these Words would afford, but I shall only speak of one.

THAT the seasonable Instruction of sick Persons, is a Work as of great Advantage, so of great Skill and Difficulty.

*First*, THAT it is a Work of great Advantage. It is a common Mistake of many Persons, that Sick-Bed Applications are in a Manner useless: It may be a Discouragement which the Devil proposeth to Ministers or others, to make them neglect this Work, or to be formal in it; especially when the Persons are ignorant and prophane, the Devil may suggest the Invalidity of a Sick-Bed Repentance, the Customariness and Hypocrisy of Sick-Bed Desires. Now to obviate such Suggestions, consider,

I. THAT the Instruction of sick Persons is GOD's Institution: So you see in the Text—a *Messenger*, *i. e.* one sent of GOD for this Purpose: Now GOD's Institutions are not in vain: Every Institution of GOD carries a Promise in its Bowels to him that doth rightly use it: Ministers or Christian Friends may go about it with much Comfort, for it is GOD's Work; it is one of those Ways (as you see in the Chapter) which GOD ordained to reclaim



reclaim Sinners; and when you attempt it, you may expect God's Concurrence. You may pray in Faith for God's Assistance in his Ordinance.

2. GOD'S Mercy may be offered even to languishing Persons: It is true, it must be done cautiously; but it may be done. GOD doth tender his Mercy, and we must not limit where GOD limits not. Ministers may safely follow GOD'S Example. And tho' such Men only come to GOD as driven by Necessity; yet GOD is so gracious, that He receives even such as mere Necessity drives to Him; and indeed all true Converts are first persuaded to come to GOD by the Sense of their own Necessities, though afterwards they are elevated to a more noble Disposition: GOD never rejected any upon this Ground: How many came to *Christ* merely in Sense of their bodily Maladies, and were sent away with spiritual Cure? *Christ* received her that came not to Him, 'till she had in vain tried all other Physicians. So in that Parable of the Prodigal (wherein GOD is pleased to represent the Methods of his Grace in the Conversion and Salvation of Sinners) you find that GOD doth not reject that poor Prodigal, because he was forced home by insuperable Straits and Difficulties.

3. SICK-BED Repentance is not impossible, tho' it be hard: Sicknes is one Means that GOD useth to work Repentance. GOD can work Repentance even upon a Sick-Bed, and it is GOD that must do it even in Health; and to speak truly and strictly, although the Means of Repentance be more probable, and the Truth of Repentance more discernable in Health than in Sicknes, yet the Practice of Repentance is as hard a Work in Health as in Sicknes; seeing in both Cases it is the great Work of the omnipotent GOD, who hath ever challenged it

as his Royal Prerogative to give Repentance: So that, in short, with Men Repentance is always impossible, *Can the Ethiopian change his Skin, or the Leopard his Spots? Then may ye also do Good that are accustomed to do Evil*, Jer. xiii. 23. but with GOD it is always possible. And yet to prevent the Abuse of this, by a presumptuous putting off Repentance to the Time of Sickness and Death; I must add, that such as put off Repentance on such a Pretext, seldom meet with it: GOD doth seldom give Repentance to such Persons. And it is a general Observation, that late Repentance is seldom true, (though true Repentance is never late) it being the just Judgment of GOD, that they that intend to mock GOD by putting off Repentance, should deceive themselves, and die without Repentance.

*Secondly*, THAT it is a Work of great Difficulty might easily be demonstrated; there are two Arguments which the Text suggests.

1. THAT it is a Work which GOD hath put into the Hands of his chief Officers, his Ministers, who ought to be the most accomplished Persons of all others: This is one of the Works for which GOD hath vouchsafed such singular Gifts to his Messengers.

2. THAT it is not every Minister neither who is fit for this Work, therefore it is required that he be *one of a thousand*.

BUT this I shall pass over, and come to the Resolution of this great and important Case of Conscience; *How Ministers or Christian Friends may, and ought to apply themselves to sick Persons for their Good, and the Discharge of their own Consciences.*

I TAKE

I TAKE it to be one of the hardest Parts of the ministerial Works, to make seasonable Applications to such Persons. I shall therefore answer it briefly in these eight Propositions or Directions.

1. ENDEAVOUR must be used to understand the State of the Sick: As Physicians do by sick Persons, they enquire into the Manner of their Life, Diet, &c. it is a great Step to the Cure, to know the Patient's Temper, because as bodily; so spiritual Physick, must be suited to the Temper and Condition of the Patient: And as Physicians take Pains in this by Conference with Friends, and examining the Patient; so should Ministers by Discourse with religious Acquaintance, and by searching Conference with the sick Persons, endeavour to find out the Truth; for why should not Men be as accurate in healing Mens Souls, as their Bodies?

2. THE great Business is to bring the sick Man to a true Sight of his State. Indeed this is a happy Thing, whatever his Condition be; if sound and good, then it is an Happiness to know it, that he may have the Comfort of it; if it be bad, yet it is an Happiness to know it, that a Man may be capable of Counsel, and put into the Way to amend it. It is true, evil Men, like Persons much in Debt, care not to look into their Books, and understand their Debts; but they must be brought to it: And the worse thy Condition is, the more thou art concerned to discover it; for to be ignorant of thy Condition, if it be good, only hinders thee from Comforts; but if it be bad, it hinders thee from Salvation. You and they must both consider, that as the Heart is always deceitful, so then especially for three Reasons amongst others: (1.) Then Men are unable to examine themselves, their natural Parts are weakened, the Eyes of their Mind clouded;

clouded; their Mind is diverted by bodily Pains, that it cannot attend, and so may sooner be cheated. (2.) Then Men are slothful and listless, as to all spiritual Exercises: If even good Men are slothful in their most healthful Times, how much more evil Men in Times of Sickness? The Listlessness of the Body generally makes an answerable Impression upon the Faculties of the Soul. (3.) In Times of Sickness Men are greedy of Comfort, and so will catch even at a Shadow. Upon all these Grounds there needs the more Caution, to set before their Eyes the Folly and Misery of Self-Deceit, in everlasting Matters.

3. MINISTERS and others must take great Heed lest while they avoid one Extreme, they run upon another. Some for the Prevention of Despair, have made such unseasonable Applications of Comfort, as have begotten presumptuous Hopes: Others to prevent Presumption, have so indiscreetly aggravated Things as to render them hopeless, and careless. There must therefore be a prudent tempering of Things together; as the wise Physician mixeth several Ingredients: He puts in Things of a sharp and corroding Nature, which may eat out or remove the noxious Humours; but addeth to them Things of a more gentle Temperature, to correct the Acrimony of the former: GOD Himself sets us a Copy by the Mouth of *Samuel*, 1 Sam. xii. 20. *You have done all this Wickedness.* There is the Corrosive; he faithfully discovers that, and doth not daub with them: Yet, lest the Disease should rather be exasperated than removed, he adds this healing Counsel, *Yet turn not aside from following the LORD*, and this Cordial, Verse 22. *The LORD will not forsake his People*: And *Ezra* follows it, *Ezra* x. 2. *We have trespassed against GOD, and have taken strange*  
*Wives;*



*Wives: Yet there is Hope in Israel concerning this; now therefore let us make a Covenant with GOD.*

4. THE same Methods are not to be used to all: You might as well give the same Pill to all diseased Persons, whereas that which would cure one, will kill another. As discreet Physicians diversify their Applications, according to the Difference of the Patient's Disposition and Condition; so here. And there are many Differences to be eyed here.

1. DIFFERENCE of Tempers, whether tender, rough and stubborn, as you read it is the Husbandman's Discretion that the Fitches are not threshed with a threshing Instrument, neither is the Cart-wheel turned upon the Cummin, but the Fitches are beaten out with a Staff, and the Cummin with a Rod, *Isa. xxviii. 27.* so it must be the Discretion of a Minister, to have Respect to the different Tempers of Men, in his Applications to them: It is said of *Christ, He taught his Disciples as they were able to bear.*

2. DIFFERENCE of Education and Conversation, some have been bred in Ignorance, others brought up in the Knowledge of the Truth, not considering this, occasions much Mischief: Discourse to an ignorant Person of the Necessity of Faith and Repentance, you lose your Labour oft-times, he conceits he hath believed and repented; for he takes Faith to be a Believing, though without any Grounds, that God hath pardoned him, and Repentance a crying God have Mercy. One must consider where Foundations must be laid—and where we need only raise Superstructures: Some have had a loose and prophane Education, others civil and religious: The former require more Terror,

ror, the latter more Caution, lest they deceive themselves.

3. DIFFERENCE of Guilt. Great Difference is to be made in the Handling of Sinners of a smaller Size, and inveterate Sinners: As GOD expects, so Ministers must endeavour that Sorrow may bear some Proportion with the Sin—*Peter having sinned wept bitterly, Mat. xxvi. ult.*

5. IT is very bad for a Guide to follow the Counsels or Desires of sick Persons, or their carnal Friends. It fares with faithful Ministers, as with honest and able Physicians, that are many Times ill thought of by the sick Man, and foolish Friends, when they put him to Pain, or Trouble; they charge him with Cruely and delighting to torment the poor Man unnecessarily, and it may be think of discharging him, and getting a Physician that will deal more gently with him: Whereas indeed he is the sick Man's best Friend, and many Times should he not pain him, he would kill him: So is it here, come to a sick Man, he cries, Comfort for God's Sake, so say his Friends, and they think all is done, if they can get Comfort: Why, you shall have it, but in due Time; you shall have Ease, Health, but you must be contented to wait for it, and expect it in due Order, first you must be sick; oft-times that Physick is the best, which makes you sickest; you shall be healed, but if you would proceed regularly, and work a true Cure, you must first have your Wound searched, and then healed, else you have only a pallitive Cure, and the Wound will fester inwardly: And it is a horrible Mistake of sick Persons, they think Comfort is all they are to look after. I tell you, it is not present Comfort, but everlasting Happiness, you must make your  
Business

Business to get: It is not *Augustus's* *ιὺδανασία*, to die quietly, like a Lamb, (as the Vulgar phrase it) but a Scripture *ιὺδανασία*, to die the Death of the Righteous: It is not so much a calm, and sweet and easy Passage, (the Fishes have that, when they swim down the sweet Stream of *Jordan*, into the dead Sea, where they perish) but a safe Harbour.

6. THE same Course for Substance is to be taken for the Conversion of sick and healthful Persons. There is but one Way to Heaven, for all Persons; and therefore consider with yourselves what you would do if you were in Health, and what were necessary. Why, that same Course you must take now; and if it be more troublesome to sick Persons, they may thank themselves for it, who neglected the Time of Health. Indeed sick Men are apt to favour themselves, and to think GOD will accept of less from them, than others; whereas, if possible, they have Need to do more than others, and to make the more Haste, having the less Time for their Work.

7. THE greatest Care must be to keep sick Persons from those Errors whereby such commonly miscarry, as,

1. INSENSIBLENESS of their Danger; whereas the first Step to a Cure, is to know one's Malady. It is a dreadful Thing to see poor ignorant and unconverted Sinners at the very Brink of the Pit, ready to drop into Hell, and not at all affected with it. If ever you mean to do them any Good, you must awaken them out of that mortal Lethargy, lighten their Eyes with a Conviction of their Danger, lest they sleep the Sleep of Death.

2. **WILLINGNESS** to be deluded. You may know it thus: If a daubing Minister or Friend offers Comfort, how greedily they catch it; they will receive Comfort upon any Ground, nay upon no Grounds, but upon the bare Words (it may be) of a Time-serving and Man-pleasing Minister. But let a serious and faithful Minister come to them, and shew them their sad, and sinful, and hazardous Condition, and demonstrate it by irrefragable Arguments, they will not yield to it: But as St. Peter speaks, *2 Pet. iii. 5. This they willingly are ignorant of.* You must possess them with the Folly of such a Temper, the unavoidable Misery of Self-deluding Persons, and the Dread of Disappointment when too late.

3. **CARELESSNESS** and Listlessness. This is the Temper of many, knowing the Difficulty of believing, repenting, and remembering their own Guilt, they cast off the Care of that, which they think will be to no Purpose. You must therefore possess them with the Necessity of Christian Carefulness: What Madness it is to be careless now, which is the only Season of caring to any Purpose: What Folly it is to free themselves from the Care of a few Days, to ascertain to themselves everlasting Care and Torment. Also you must possess them with the Benefit of this Care, and laying it to Heart, that it is God's Course in opening the Heart, to stir up this Care.

4. **RESTING** in Generals. This deceives many to Hell: You may discourse excellently against Sin in the general, and raise in them some Passion against it, yet not profit them at all: For true Repentance takes Notice of particular Sins. And as Generals have no Existence, but in the Particulars, according



according to Principles of Philosophy; so it is Sin in particular, which doth primarily affect the Heart of a true Penitent.

5. THE Concealment of some hidden Way of Wickedness, I believe, hath sent many to Hell; they would never make their Disease known, thro' Fear of Shame: As some Persons have died of those Diseases which they have smothered. It is true, a Man is not bound to make Confession of all his Sins to a Minister, as we rightly assert against Papists; but yet all Divines grant, that in many Cases it is both expedient and necessary to acknowledge thy Wickedness to Men. To say nothing of those Cases wherein it is sometimes necessary, nor of many Reasons which make it frequently expedient, I shall only instance in one, which is sufficient of itself many Times; that the Physician knowing more exactly thy Malady, may more effectually proportion his Remedy. Possess them with this in such Cases, How infinitely better it is to have some Shame before a Friend, who will cover your Shame, and hate to reproach you with it, than before all the World.

6. TAKE Heed of healing the Souls of sick Persons slightly. This we are very apt to, 1. From the sick Man's greedy Desire of Comfort. 2. From the Expectation and Desire of carnal Friends. 3. From our own careless Hearts, that love not to put ourselves to any Trouble or Reproach, which we shall meet with, if we be faithful in this Case: However take Heed of it; *Jer. viii. 11. They have healed the Hurt of the Daughter of my People slightly, saying, Peace, Peace, when there is no Peace.* This is the Case: A Soul (whether in Sicknes or in Health, must first be wounded, then healed: There

F f 2

must

must be Sorrow and Travel ere the Man-Child be brought forth: There must be true Repentance and godly Sorrow—deep Sorrow; they daub, that tell you otherwise, and make GOD a Liar: Repentance is neither a short, nor a superficial Work. — Persuade them to wait GOD's Leisure, and in GOD's Way, for the Cure, not to precipitate your Work. Persuade them not to be afraid of Sorrow and Trouble, but rather to fear the Want of it; for here is a common and fatal Mistake; most Men are afraid of Sorrow, and labour to drive away Sorrow; whereas indeed Sorrow is the Midwife of all true Joy. Tears of penitential Sorrow, are *the Streams that lead us to the Rivers of Pleasure, which are at GOD's Right Hand.* And on the contrary, to be a Stranger to godly Sorrow, is one of the dreadfulest Signs of a lost Soul. The Laughter of such a Person, is a *Risus Sardonicus*, a deadly Joy. Labour more to work a solid, than a sudden Cure.

THERE are other Directions I thought to have given; but these may suffice; and I will conclude all with two or three Uses, first to Ministers, then to People.

I. To Ministers. Hence we may learn the great Difficulty of the ministerial Work. We see one Reason why *Paul* said, *Who is sufficient for these Things?* O what a Sin and Shame it is to see what Persons venture upon this Work! that such undertake to be Shepherds of *Christ's* Flock, that are hardly fit to be set with the Dogs of the Flock! *Father forgive them, they know not what they do.* Many act, as if they thought this were all the Work of a Minister, to make a few Sermons, and read some Prayers. No, no; a Minister must be thoroughly furnished to every good Work: He must  
be

be apt and able for every Work; this, among others. O what angelical Abilities doth it require! Acuteness to discern the sick Man's Temper, Knowledge to understand the Nature of all Spiritual Diseases, the Symptoms, the Prognosticks, as also the Antidotes and Remedies; Wisdom to make suitable and speedy Applications. O how hard a Case is it! Many sick Men can endure neither the Disease of their Souls, nor their Remedy. A Minister had Need know all Things, understand all Persons, discern the Subtilties of Mens Hearts, and not be ignorant of the Wiles of the Devil.

How many Knots must he be able speedily to untie? How many Cases must he be able to give speedy Resolution to? And he must be supposed to have laid up with great Industry, because he must bring forth out of his Treasure, *Things both new and old*. O the Difficulty! It is a sad Thing to consider, that many Souls do perish, not only by the Force of their Disease, but also by the Error of their Physician, by the Mistakes of their Ministers: And as *Galen* speaks of Physick for the Body, it is also true of the Physick of the Soul; *In Medicina nihil exiguum*; "In Physick nothing is little;" A little Error there, may occasion fearful Mischiefs: So a small Mistake in Souls Concernments, may occasion everlasting Ruin.

2. To People. Is it of such Difficulty? O labour you to do your Work in Health, while Time and Strength last, before the evil Days come. He that neglects the Time of Health for the doing of his great Work, he shall feel the Worth of it by the Want of it. I beseech you let me reason with you: Why will you run a Hazard, when you may go a safe Way? Consider what woful Straits you

F f 3

will

will bring yourselves to; if you do not ponder your Ways, and fix your Thoughts, and afflict your Hearts, you kill your Souls; if you do, perhaps your Bodies. What a dreadful Dilemma is this? The Physician chargeth you not to trouble yourselves with sad Thoughts, lest you overthrow your Bodies; and the Minister, if he will be faithful, must charge you to trouble yourselves, lest you lose your Souls. O consider now; now you may consider, you have the Use of Reason, then Reason may be lost: Now God will accept of you, then it may be He will reject you: Now you are at Leisure to consider, then *sufficient unto the Day will be the Evil thereof*. And therefore be persuaded to improve the Time of Health.

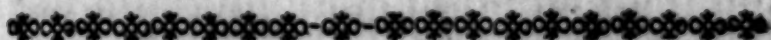
It is the general Custom of sick Persons, to send for Ministers to prepare them for the future Life, when they despair of the Enjoyment of this present Life. Thus they begin to live at the End of their Life: But you, if you be wise, take this Counsel, (and O that my Words might prevail with you) desire to speak with able and godly Ministers in the Time of your Health: That, that is the acceptable Time; then may they give Counsel freely, and you may follow their Counsel thoroughly. That was the Course of those Converts, *Acts ii*. They did not tarry 'till their Souls were ready to breathe out themselves into Eternity; but in the Time of their Health applied themselves to *Peter*, and the rest, *Men and Brethren, what shall we do?*

3. MAKE such Applications to your Friends in Health, as you must do in Sickness, if you mean to discharge your Duty to God, or Friendship to them; you will give them and yourselves too great Ease and Advantage by it. Remember,  
what



what obligeth you to do it in Sickness, obligeth you also in Health: You are your Brother's Keepers; you have all the Cure of Souls. And as Ministers are bound to this Work by Virtue of their Office; so are you bound to it by the Law of Love: And surely, if every one of you are bound to deliver your Neighbour's Ox or Ass, when you see it fallen into a Pit; much more are you obliged to have Compassion upon their Souls, when they are going down to the Pit, from which there is no Redemption.

*End of the Thirty-eighth VOLUME.*



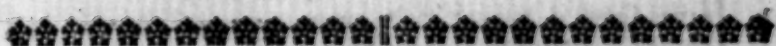




# THE CONTENTS



THIRTY-EIGHTH VOLUME.



DEVOTIONAL TRACTS. *Translated  
from the French.*

LETTERS *to the Duke of Burgundy, from M.  
De Fenelon, Archbishop of Cambray.*

	Page
<b>L</b> ETTER 1. Of the Love of God —	5
Letter 2. On the same —	11

LETTERS *from and concerning B. Lau-  
rence.*

The first Letter from B. <i>Laurence</i> , to the Reverend —, on the Presence of God	14
The second — — —	18
The third — — —	20
The fourth — — —	21
The fifth — — —	22

CON-

# The CONTENTS.

## CONVERSATIONS *with B. Laurence.*

	Page
The first Conversation — — — —	24
The second — — — —	26
The third — — — —	30
The fourth — — — —	32
A Letter from <i>Mary Henrics</i> , to one troubled in Mind — — — —	38

## PIOUS REFLECTIONS. *Translated from the French.*

1. How scarce true Faith is — —	49
2. Of the only Way to Heaven — —	50
3. Of Patience in Suffering — —	52
4. Of Submission and Conformity to the Will of God — —	53
5. Of the right Use of Afflictions — —	54
6. Of Meekness and Humility — —	55
7. Of the one Thing needful — —	57
8. Of Inward Peace — —	58
9. Of deceitful Joys — —	59
10. Of Holy Tears — —	60
11. Of Worldly Wisdom — —	61
12. Of the Easiness of <i>Christ's</i> Yoke — —	63
13. Of spending our Time well — —	64
14. Of the Love we ought to have for GOD — —	65
15. On the Words, LORD, <i>teach us to pray</i> , Luke xi. 1. — — — —	67
16. Of the good Use of Crosses — —	ib.

## *A Mother's Advice to her Daughter.*

Sect. 1. Some Directions for Devotion — —	74
Sect. 2. Of the Divine Presence — —	76
Sect. 3. How to pass the Day religiously — —	81
	Sect.



# The CONTENTS.

	Page
Sect. 4. Concerning Mortification	84
Sect. 5. Some Rules for Conversation	87

## EXTRACT *from a Prospect of Divine Providence.*

Chap. 1. That there is a Providence, proved from Scripture	93
From Prayers made to God	94
Chap. 2. Several Objections to a Divine Providence answer'd	99
Chap. 3. Providence, as upholding the Creatures, considered in several Respects	101
Providence is either Ordinary or Extraordinary	103
Providence distinguished into immediate and mediate	104
Chap. 4. The Extent of Providence shewn divers Ways	105
Sect. 1. That the Providence of God reacheth to the Wills of Men	107
Sect. 2. That the Providence of God reaches to the Sins of Men	111
Sect. 3. Proofs of the Extent of Providence to Contingents	113
Instructions drawn from these Proofs	117
Sect. 4. That the Providence of God extends to the Death of Men	119
Instructions drawn from thence	125
Sect. 5. That the Providence of God extends to the meanest Creatures	127
Chap. 5. containing several Observations	
Obs. 1. The Knowledge Men have of the Providence of God is imperfect	131
Obs. 2. The Administration of Things in the World, is according to the Draught of Divine Wisdom	135
	Obs.

# The CONTENTS.

	Page
Obs. 3. There is a glorious Display of the Power of GOD in the Management of Matters in the World — —	139
Obs. 4. GOD never hath his Vacation-Time; though He may seem to do little or nothing sometimes in his Administration of the World — —	145
Obs. 5. GOD doth some Thing, yea much, whilst He seems to do little or nothing; and doth little or nothing, whilst Men are in Expectation of great Matters —	147
Obs. 6. There is an admirable Connection of Things with Things, whereby this or that is effected. Providence hath its Chain, the several Links whereof are set together by an over-ruling Hand — —	150
Obs. 7. There is an Extraordinary Walk of Providence in the World, as well as an Ordinary one — —	154
Obs. 8. <i>Jesus Christ</i> , as Mediator, is the Father's Vicegerent, Plenipotentiary, or supreme Moderator of Things in the World — — —	157
Obs. 9. The Angels are capacious Wheels, which move in the great Clock of the World: There is a subordinate Agency of Angels, in bringing about Matters in the World — — —	160
Obs. 10. The same Creature may prove a Friend or Foe, as GOD in his Providence ordereth — — —	169
Obs. 11. The great GOD is greatly to be seen in the meanest or least of his Creatures — — —	175
Obs. 12. Providence is the great Steward of the Household of this World — —	180

# The CONTENTS.

	Page
Obs. 13. Providence hath its different Courts, in which the Sons of Men have their dif- ferent Stations — — —	184
Obs. 14. There is a Subserviency of the Af- fairs of GOD's People — —	187
Obs. 15. Providence outwits the Church's Enemies in their Contrivances against the Church — — —	192
A notable Story for the Illustration of this —	202
Obs. 16. Providence hath various Aspects in the same Matters — — —	203
Obs. 17. Providence hath its Harmonies, tho' it seems to sound Discords — —	208
Obs. 18. There is a retaliating Work ob- servable in GOD's dealing with Men —	213
Some Examples of this — —	216
Obs. 19. The Circumstances of Time and Place afford weighty Instructions to the Observers of Providence — —	220
Obs. 20. Man's Extremity is Heaven's Op- portunity — — —	224
Obs. 21. Hinderances, when and where the LORD so pleaseth, become Furtherances	228
Obs. 22. The Use of Means is Man's Work; the Success of them is GOD's Work —	233
The Conclusion. Some general Directions for the Improvement of providential Dis- pensations — — —	238

## EXTRACT from Molinos's SPIRITUAL GUIDE.

### P A R T I.

*Of the Temptations wherewith GOD purges Souls.*

Chap. 1. To the End GOD may rest in the Soul, the Heart is always to be kept peace- able in whatsoever Temptations —	249
--	-----

## The CONTENTS.

	Page
Chap. 2. The Soul ought to persevere in Prayer — — —	251
Chap. 3. The Soul is not to afflict itself, nor intermit Prayer, because it sees itself encompassed with Dryness and Darkness —	254
Chap. 4. It is necessary that GOD purge the Soul after his Way, because the Exercises that of itself it sets about, are not sufficient — — —	257
Chap. 5. The Soul ought not to be disquieted, nor draw back in the Spiritual Way, because it finds itself assaulted by Temptations — — —	259
Chap. 6. The Nature of internal Recollection — — —	262

## PART II.

*Of Spiritual Martyrdoms ; of Contemplation, perfect Resignation, Humility and internal Peace.*

Chap. 1. Who are truly Spiritual Men —	269
Chap. 2. Of the spiritual Martyrdom, where-with GOD cleanseth the Soul that He unites with Himself — — —	274
Chap. 3. Inward Mortification, perfect Resignation and Humility, are necessary for obtaining Internal Peace —	279
Chap. 4. Of Inward Solitude —	286

EXTRACTS



## The CONTENTS.

EXTRACTS from two SERMONS preached at  
*Cripplegate*, by Dr. SAMUEL ANNESLEY.

Page

### S E R M O N I.

How may we be universally and exactly conscientious ?

Acts. xxiv. 16. *And herein do I exercise myself, to have a Conscience void of Offence toward GOD, and toward Men* — — 297

### S E R M O N II.

How Ministers or Christian Friends may, and ought to apply themselves to sick Persons, for their Good, and the Discharge of their own Conscience ?

Job xxxiii. 23, 24. *If there be a Messenger with him, an Interpreter, one among a thousand, to shew unto Man his Uprightness; then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down into the Pit, I have found a Ransom* — — — 339



The Constitution

It is the duty of every citizen to support the Constitution and the laws of the United States.

Section 1. All legislative Powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives.

Section 2. The House of Representatives shall be composed of Members chosen every second Year by the People of the several States, and the Electors in each State shall have the Qualifications requisite for Electors of the most numerous Branch of the State Legislature.

Section 3. The Senate of the United States shall be composed of two Senators from each State, chosen by the Legislature thereof, for six Years; and each Senator shall have the Qualifications requisite for Senators of the most numerous Branch of the State Legislature.

Section 4. The Times, Places and Manner of holding the Elections of Senators and Representatives, shall be prescribed in each State by the Legislature thereof; but the Congress may at any time by Law alter or add to the Rules and Regulations of the foregoing.

Section 5. The Congress shall have Power to regulate the Election and Term of Service of the Senators and Representatives.

Section 6. The Senators and Representatives shall receive a Compensation for their Services, which shall be ascertained by Law.

